PRIVATE EYE

No. 1236
15 May –
28 May 2009
£1.50

PARLIAMENT'S SHAME

INSIDE: Apology for a Prime Minister

LEXUS
The pursuit of perfection

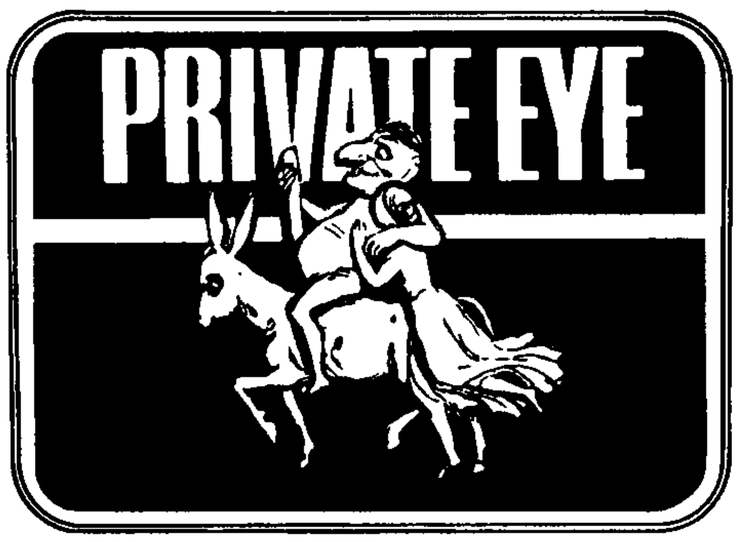
VALUE YOU CAN ADMIRE

With the IS 220d SE you'll find more than just good looks. Like emissions of just **148 g/km CO_2** (20% BIK tax), 13 speaker sound system, smart entry and climate control, all for just £299 a month* (6 rentals + VAT in advance. Business users only). To find out more about the great value and stunningly good looking Lexus IS 220d SE, go to lexus.co.uk or contact your local Lexus Centre to arrange a test drive.

IS

Model shown is IS 220d SE at £22,990 including optional metallic paint at £580. *Advertised finance offer available for business users only on Lexus IS 220d SE Manual (without metallic paint), when ordered, registered and financed through Lexus Financial Services on Lexus Contract Hire between 1 April and 30 June 2009 at participating Lexus Centres. Advertised rental based on a 3 year non-maintained contract at 10,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charges apply. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Terms and conditions apply. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s only. Lexus Financial Services, Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5UZ. Subject to availability. Prices correct at time of going to print and include VAT, delivery, number plates, full tank of fuel, one years road fund licence and £55 first registration fee. Please note that the Government Scrappage Incentive cannot be used in addition to existing special offers from Lexus (including finance offers). Please consult with your local Lexus Centre for full details.

IS 220d fuel economy figures: extra-urban 58.9mpg (4.8L/100km), urban 39.8mpg (7.1L/100km), combined 50.4mpg (5.6L/100km). CO_2 emissions 148g/km.



Flipping heck!

- New spin on Telegraph cricket 5
- MPs gang up on a taxpayers' champion 6
- Why Melvyn got the chop: Eye TV 8
- Poverty fund that's a private goldmine 26
- Victory for the British Airways One 28
- Eady rides again: In the Courts 30

"IT WAS all within the rules". The mantra repeated robotically by every MP – before the suddenly equally obligatory "I am very sorry" – as the details of their abuse of taxpayers' money has cashcaded into public view.

Strangely this has never been the view of the Supreme Leader and others when it comes to complex but legal tax avoidance schemes used by multinational companies and rich individuals. Then it was morally wrong if legally right. But *when it* comes to MPs, they are different. And that is not just the view inside the Westminster bubble: it is also the view of the taxman.

MPs have increasingly become treated very differently in a number of lucrative ways from other high earners and top rate taxpayers, such as captains of industry or even City bankers. They have a number of exemptions – of which the treatment of benefits and the second home allowance are among the most profitable – denied to their fellow citizens who face tax at 40 percent, and from next year 50 percent, on such benefits in kind. One estimate puts that saving at more than £50,000 a year on the average MP's expenses of at least £135,000.

And the most rewarding of these, the complete tax exemption of the overnight allowance, which is key to the second home benefit rip-off, was confirmed and updated (from 1988) by the Labour government… and none other than the now apologetic Supreme Leader when he was chancellor via the Income Tax (Earnings & Pensions) Act 2003. Yes: yet again it's all Gordon's fault!

● *More from Slicker, p. 29*

NUMBER CRUNCHING

£250 Winter fuel allowance for all pensioners, for which government is considering introducing means testing in order to save money

£25,000 Additional costs allowance for all MPs, which government is considering changing because they've been caught out

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.subsonline.co.uk
Email: private-eye@servicehelpline.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£28 per annum. Europe and Eire £34. Airmail (rest of world) £38.
Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR.
Email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com
Display: 020 7878 2366 **Classified:** 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by COMAG Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE. Tel 01895 433600.

ABC

THE *Daily Mail*, Britain's most patriotic newspaper, has been fizzing over MPs' devious tactics involving their second homes expenses. So isn't it time its non-dom proprietor Lord Rothermere, aka Jonathan Harmsworth, came clean about where he himself is domiciled for tax purposes?

When the *Eye* last inquired into his lordship's possible French domicile connections (*Eye* 1234), a spokesman said this was an "entirely private matter". But, we can reveal, Lord Rothermere must already have decided to leave Great Britain if his tax arrangements are to be believed.

When the government caved in to wealthy non-doms by agreeing not to tax them on income kept offshore as long as they pay a derisory £30,000 annual levy, the taxman put out fresh guidelines on who would qualify for the cushy fiscal status. On HMRC's analysis, the man who was born in Hammersmith, educated at Gordonstoun and brings up his family in a £40m Palladian home set in 220 acres of Wiltshire countryside would struggle.

An individual's domicile status is, says HMRC, determined by his intentions, place of permanent residence, business interests, social and family interests and ownership of property. On all except the first of these criteria Rothermere is a true Brit. Small wonder Revenue specialists and lawyers resolved to investigate his status until Revenue boss Dave Hartnett mysteriously intervened (*Eye* 1231).

Thus the only way the *Daily Mail* boss can claim to be non-dom is if he has decided *not* to stay in the UK. Moreover, tax experts tell the *Eye*, he must also have decided *when* he is going for good. As there will be quite a leaving bash to organise, the *Eye* asked Rothermere's spokesman just when he will be off. Sadly he refused to say. Must be a surprise party!

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

"Sir Fred Goodwin should not count on being £650,000 a year better off. It's a huge amount of money for nothing. The Prime Minister has made it clear that it is unacceptable and the government will take action."

[Interviewer]: "But what action can the government take? Sir Fred has said that it's his contractual right."

"I don't want to go into all the details of what methods might be taken. But Sir Fred should not be counting on this. It might be enforceable in a court of law, but it is not acceptable in the court of public opinion, and that's where the government steps in."

– **Harriet Harman**, *interviewed on BBC, 1 March*

"People have claimed in good faith under the system. MPs make the claim under the system and it's for the House of Commons fees office to decide whether it comes within the rules. MPs make their claims under the rules and the money is paid out only if they are satisfied that the claim is within the rules."

– **Harriet Harman**, *interviewed on BBC, 8 May*

WHAT has happened to Richard Granger, head of the NHS's disastrous £12.7bn National Programme for IT until he resigned in January 2008?

That's what the *Eye* was trying to find out after hearing that Granger was now involved with the very company, iSoft, that is supposed to be supplying software to half of Britain's hospitals under the programme, and which he saved from collapse with a series of taxpayer-funded bail-outs in 2006.

No sooner had the *Eye*'s hack made a straightforward enquiry to iSoft's new Australian parent company, IBA, about what Granger was doing for the firm, than in came a stiff letter from lawyers Schillings, reminding *Private Eye* of its "duties of responsible journalism" and its client's "reasonable expectation of privacy in respect of his day-to-day life, amongst other things".

"For the avoidance of doubt," confirmed Schillings, "our client does not consent to any interference with his right to privacy" – which showed a touching sensitivity from the man who wanted everybody's health records automatically uploaded on to a national database.

"In the circumstances," the lawyers demanded, "our client requires you to provide, by no later than 4pm [on the following day]: 1. A detailed list of all the people [the *Eye* hack has been in touch with]; 2. A full and detailed list of each allegation and enquiry; 3. Confirmation of your print deadline for any article concerning our client; 4. Confirmation that you will put each and every allegation/enquiry to our client, through these offices, giving no less than 48 hours for a response."

The editor of *Private Eye* referred Schillings to the case of Arkell vs Pressdram (1971) and then used the threatening letter from the law firm in his appearance before the parliamentary select committee on press standards, privacy and libel as evidence of the "chilling effect" on legitimate reporting of the sinister new privacy law that is developing in Britain (see *Eyes passim*).

PS. For the record, iSoft's PR manager, Brian Hemming, tells the *Eye*: "Richard Granger has been our guest speaker, most recently at an IBA event at [a health IT] conference in Chicago. He is not a paid consultant to IBA."

DESPITE owning seven properties and having a fortune estimated at £15m, Northern Ireland secretary Shaun Woodward still claimed the maximum second homes allowance as well as £100,000 in mortgage interest payments.

According to the *Telegraph,* he also "bills the taxpayer for his deliveries of *Private Eye* magazine, which costs £1.50 per fortnight."

The *Eye* can suggest at least one way in which he could stop being such a burden on the taxpayer: take out a subscription and receive 30 issues of Britain's best-selling news and current affairs magazine for just £28 – a saving of 56.7p on each and every issue. Plus, of course, he could consider paying for it himself.

"Haven't you lot got second homes to go to?"

Street Of Shame

WEIRDO *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade went "berserk... absolutely mental" last Thursday, according to eyewitnesses, when news broke of the *Telegraph*'s exclusive story about MPs' expenses. Wade apparently "bollocked senior staff, executives were ashen-faced, the office was in meltdown".

Why so? The *Sun* had not only missed the big story; it transpires it had actually turned it down. And who was the exec responsible for vetoing the scoop? Step forward Rebekah Wade, who had refused to meet the asking price.

This is the latest in a growing trend of outbursts from the flame-haired hothead. Only three days earlier, Wade had also reacted badly to the *Mirror*'s exclusive interview with Karen Matthews and sent a bad-tempered email to every *Sun* hack asking: "Can you tell me when you showed such initiative?... There is nothing more useless than a reporter who doesn't break stories."

Speaking of breaking things... "The *Sun*'s campaign against domestic violence shocked many readers," Wade's newspaper reported in September 2005. "And it's not only women who are suffering – men pointed out that they have been victims too."

What happened next? A month later, Wade was arrested for violently assaulting her then husband, tough-guy Ross Kemp.

Now the *Sun* has decided to relaunch the campaign. "EXCLUSIVE: BATTERED MEN," its front page bellowed last week. "THE OTHER SIDE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE."

History won't repeat itself, will it? Surely not. But Wade's latest paramour, Old Etonian turf-fancier Charlie Brooks, might be well advised to hire a bodyguard for the next month or two, just in case.

Meanwhile, what has happened to *Sun* columnist Anila Baig? Launched as a "New Voice In The Sun" amid much fanfare (and the paper's first ever picture byline to feature a hijab) in September 2004, she has had a considerably lower profile in recent years – though she could always rely on her regular gig compiling the "What To Watch Tonight" box for the TV listings pages. On 27 April, however, she abruptly departed that berth.

It appears Wade took grave offence at her daring to recommend an episode of BBC1's *Ashes to Ashes* as the "Best Drama" of the night. The episode featured a blink-and-you'll-miss-it scene in which characters were shown looking at the *Sun*'s infamous "Gotcha!" front page after the sinking of the *General Belgrano* in 1982, and speculating that the issues involved might not be so black-and-white as they were being presented in some quarters.

Criticism of the *Sun* – even if it is implied, 27 years out-of-date and fictional – is unacceptable in Wade's weird new world.

HACKWATCH

Tanya Gold

"CONFESSIONAL journalism can make people realise that they are not alone – and that their newspaper sees them," proclaimed Tanya Gold in the *Guardian* this month, praising her own style of journalism along with other "superb newspaper writing in the last 20 years [which] would have to include Liz Jones's Diaries about her love life... I have written about my recovery from alcoholism, my eating disorder and my ex-boyfriends."

Yes. Then there's the rest...

26 June 2008: "I wear big pants," Gold tells readers of the *Guardian*. "I just went to Starbucks with no pants on. I was sure everyone on the street was staring at me."

11 July: The *Daily Mail*. "Let me tell you about the night I was very nearly raped."

19 July: "A month ago, I decided to go out and find all my ex-boyfriends, to see what has happened to them, and to conduct a live-action autopsy of our relationships." In the course of 2,750 words, *Guardian* readers meet Adam ("lots of oral sex"), Matthew ("We began to have threesomes"), Nat ("He whispers, 'I still masturbate over you'"), and her current boyfriend who is "living in Fulham with somebody else, the mother of his infant son".

13 August: Fleeting self-doubt creeps into the *Guardian*. "My breasts feel soft. I cannot believe I am typing this. I cannot believe I am reviewing the elasticity of my breasts."

10 November: The *Mail* invites Tanya to undergo intensive yoga. "My last boyfriend looked like the Phantom Of The Opera without his mask," she mentions as she awaits her personal trainer. "All I can do is wonder if I have flushed the toilet."

13 November: Another treat for *Guardian* readers over breakfast. "I'm fat. F.A.T. I really am. I have moved out of denial and into maternity clothes... I have begun to get nervous about travelling on the tube, because I spread on to neighbouring seats."

22 November: And over to the *Mail*. "Ladies and gentleman, I am fat. You want to know how fat?" No? Tough. She spends 1,750 words telling them anyway.

30 November: The *Observer* gets in on the action. "I am gaining about two stone a year in my present incarnation and I now weigh as much as a truck." Gold has, however, discovered a new diet pill – with what most people would consider an unfortunate side effect. "But incontinence doesn't bother me. If you were as fat as I am, incontinence would be a gift. I haven't had an accident in public yet. But at this rate of weight loss, I can't wait."

19 December: "I am currently dating a very hairy man," Gold tells *Mail* readers. "It is all over his legs and chest, and it is beginning to make small but determined sorties on to his back and shoulders. In his most private moments, he talks about buying tweezers to pluck it. But I love it."

20 December: The *Mail*. "I am going to spend a few days in Celebrity Blogland. What will I learn — other than that all celebrities are monumental egotists?" Answer: nothing. "They can't disguise how insane and needy and boring they really are. But we really should stop paying them attention. It's not good for them, you know."

1 January 2009: "As regular readers of the *Daily Mail* know, my stomach is an obsession with me." For those who don't know, the paper has just given Gold a weekly column to write about "conquering her weight demons".

12 March: The *Guardian* asks Gold to live without her mobile phone for a week. "I need a mobile," she frets. "I have accepted commissions while sitting on toilets. I always take my mobile into the toilet." 2,000 words – and accompanying online video – later, she confesses: "I am enjoying making calls on my landline. It feels solid, adult, formal. It takes 13 seconds to dial a number on it."

14 March: In a travel piece for the *Guardian*, Gold visits the Grand Canyon with her mother. "Mum always makes me behave like a born-again Christian," she reveals. "I get priggish, and she responds by putting Do Not Disturb signs on her bedroom door... We only have one bitch fight." She omits to give any description of the Grand Canyon whatsoever.

2 April: "Regular readers know that I have a dark and self-destructive streak and I like to punish myself," writes Tanya in her *Mail* dieting column. More punishment next week!

6 April: "I have recently embarked on the Chew Diet," Gold tells the *Guardian*. "The Chew Diet fulfils the most important criteria of stupid diets – it must disgust people when you tell them about it." So she does.

21 April: *Evening Standard* readers haven't heard about that diet pill yet – so Gold fills them in. "My loo thought it was hosting the Oscars. I didn't dare make love, let alone sneeze. Do you understand? Am I getting through to you?"

"Sometimes, particularly with the diet columns, I look and I think – is that too much?" Gold 'fessed up in the *Guardian* last week. "And then I think why not? Everyone has a story to tell, and if they want to, they should tell it. And this is mine."

NO national newspaper – not even the *Telegraph* – has been more foamingly outraged by MPs' huge living expenses than the *Daily Mail*.

These perks are quite different, of course, from the trappings of high office enjoyed by the *Mail*'s own editor-in-chief, hairshirted Paul Dacre. For many years, the paper used to pay for him to have a London flat, costing upwards of £50,000 a year, a perk which was declared in the annual report. Last year, apart from his £1.1m annual salary, he collected a further £467,000 in "cash allowances" in lieu of pension payments and "instead of the company providing Central London accommodation".

THE most startling intervention at the recent "privacy debate" hosted by the *Times* and Matrix Chambers came from legal dynamo Jennifer McDermott, privacy lawyer by appointment to the Barclay brothers.

McDermott, who also chairs the executive board of Justice *(isn't that the organisation that promotes human rights and the quality of justice? – Ed)*, showed a fine disregard for the fact that the Dirty Digger was co-sponsoring the debate as she proposed that anyone in Wapping who had contrived to expose Max Mosley's penchant for thrashings should be imprisoned.

We wait to see if any of those judges dotted round Europe still hearing cases brought by Mosley will adopt her helpful suggestion. If the Digger or his minions do go to jail, no doubt Justice will take up their case.

CAROL Ann Duffy hesitated over whether to accept the position of poet laureate, according to some reports, because she feared the press's invasion of her privacy.

No doubt her brother Eugene was able to reassure her on that score. As managing editor of the Mirror Group, Eugene Duffy made a memorable appearance before the culture, media and sport select committee two years ago, arguing for self-regulation of the press. When Labour MP Rosemary McKenna suggested that "you seem to think that all public figures are fair game and that it is OK to rifle through the refuse outside people's homes", Duffy corrected her. "We do not go through people's bins. We have never found much material there worth publishing," he said.

Two weeks after his denial, the *Sunday Mirror* carried a story about the amount of paper, plastic and food, together with bags of unrecycleable nappies, thrown out by David Cameron. And how did it get the story? By going through his bins!

"I want to cancel the Telegraph I've been claiming on expenses"

"Next question: when I stopped you, were you: a) looking for something to help pass the time, b) flattered I'd chosen you, or c) just plain happy to help?

HIS wealth is shrinking, the circulation of his *Evening Standard* is plummeting, but KGB veteran Alexander Lebedev remains invincibly cheerful. He has sent out invitations to dear friends to attend a private "celebration" in Florence on 16 July.

The definition of "friends" is a bit elastic, however. In luxury penthouses the world over, rich white trash and bling-babes have been opening the "stiffy" and furrowing their botoxed brows as they wonder who on earth Alexander Lebedev is. Many names seem to have been supplied by Geordie Greig, the former *Tatler* editor who is now the KGB man's factotum and major domo.

Lebedev junior, Evgeny, is also enjoying a rapid social ascent thanks to the *Standard* connection. A fortnight ago he was invited to spend the weekend at Lord and Lady Rothermere's Wiltshire estate, where the other house-guests were David and Samantha Cameron. Young Evgeny looked fit to burst with pride at this formal acceptance by the English aristocracy. Wisely, he didn't tell his hosts what was coming the next day: an advertising blitz all over London saying "SORRY" that the *Evening Standard* had been so dire under the ownership of, er, Lord Rothermere.

The "sorry" campaign wasn't just a slap in the face for Rothermere and former editor Veronica Wadley. Almost all the hacks and executives producing the *Standard* today were there under the old regime a few months ago, and are less than delighted at being so publicly and comprehensively trashed by the new regime. Greig gave his colleagues another kicking in a *Grauniad* interview this Monday, describing their work as "negative, doom-laden, narrow, predictable".

Still, there is one new face apart from Geordie. Frolicsome deputy editor Sarah Sands started work just in time for this week's redesign, which was intended to make the paper look "light and bright" – like a freesheet, in fact. Hacks have been ordered to file only "positive" stories. How they are to report the current economic and political disasters? No one knows, but Geordie and Sarah assume readers don't want that sort of thing. What they yearn for is "sex and style", and Sands will provide it in abundance. She has already signed up a brilliant new sex-columnist. "The paper certainly has its problems," mutters one bemused hack. "But I don't know if having Peaches Geldof as the agony aunt is the solution."

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Geordie Greig poses for a picture in his office under a large signed poster scrawled with 'Fuck' given to him by the artists Gilbert and George when he joined the *Standard*."
– Interview with the new Evening Standard *editor to publicise paper's relaunch, 11 May*

"EXCLUSIVE: Gilbert and George, the art world's most controversial double act, by Geordie Greig."
– Feature trailed on front page of relaunched Evening Standard, *11 May*

"WILLS steps out with the lesser spotted Kate," shrieked the front page of the *Daily Mail*, beneath pictorial evidence of a "rare sighting" of the prince's girlfriend at a polo match. "Miss Middleton, 27, has kept a rather low profile this year," the paper noted.

Well, yes and no. Miss Middleton is actually still going about her life in much the usual way – but the paper has, since a ban by rival publications and the denunciation by the Press Complaints Commission of paparazzi harassment of the woman as "grotesque" and "troubling" in 2007, been grudgingly forced to limit its coverage of her day-to-day activities.

Readers missing their fix of pictures of her driving her car, leaving her flat, and, er, "exposing quite significant amounts of fishnet-clad leg" should head to the archives on the *Mail* website, where such shots remain in all their long-lens grotesquery.

DISQUIET at the *Sunday Times* over the last *Eye*'s story about news editor Nick Hellen's referring to Abul Taher, one of the reporters under his command, as a "suicide bomber". Hellen was swiftly summoned to a meeting with head of news Charles Hymas and ageing number-three Bob Tyrer, from which he emerged and made a call to Taher himself.

Was he ready to apologise? Was he heck. Instead, Hellen wanted to know if Taher would support him in legal action or a complaint to the Press Complaints Commission against the *Eye*. This seems unlikely, given that it would put Taher in the unenviable position of having to u-turn on claims made in writing to the News International human resources department that Hellen had done exactly as described.

At least Hellen can take comfort from the fact that Taher's complaint of racism and bullying has not been upheld. Following an investigation led by Tyrer, the paper has decided that calling a Muslim a terrorist is "insensitive" but not racist. Taher has accepted redundancy. A further complaint about a culture of bullying on the newsdesk submitted by the News International Staff Association still awaits a response.

***GUARDIAN* editor Alan Rusbridger is a happy chappy. "Wonderful news," he chirped in an email to staff last week, congratulating them on awards won, a 0.7 percent increase in readership and all sorts of other signs that everything in the Guardian was rosy.**

"Waltzing off with three more Webbies is a pretty spectacular achievement. Waltzing off with the Best Newspaper on the Web four years out of five is actually stunning… we are currently the most innovative newspaper company in the world… extraordinary… wonderful… congratulations… very good…"

Oddly, Rusbridger omitted to make any mention of the week's biggest news in York Way: the slightly less cheerful announcement that at least 50 *Guardian* hacks will be out of a job by the end of the year.

***EVENING Standard* political columnist Anne McElvoy did not stint on the name-dropping when she wrote a *Spectator* diary about her recent holiday in America.**

She made mention of her evenings spent with "Les Hinton, the seigneur of Dow Jones, and his fiancée Kath Raymond", "Tina Brown and Harry Evans" and "Joanna Coles, a feisty British export as editor of the American *Marie Claire*". She went on to recount how Coles "kindly gives us dinner at the hotspot Waverly Inn".

But then the *Marie Claire* editor had much to be grateful for. A month ago, just before flying out on her American holiday, McElvoy helped arrange a glowing interview in the *Standard* with Coles by New York hack Tom Teodorczuk. Sample quote: "For now Coles is on a roll, and is sharper than high heels..."

GHOST STORY

For the field is full of shades as I near a shadowy coast,
And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost…
– Francis Thompson, "At Lord's"

THE England and Wales Cricket Board must have vetted a record number of hacks from the *Daily Telegraph* this summer, to judge by the proliferation of bylines on the paper's cricket reports. Curiously, however, the exact opposite is the case. A fortnight before the season started, *Telegraph* sports supremos David Bond and Mark "Skippy" Skipworth laid off almost all the regular freelances who have been reporting county games for many years, and parachuted in some inexpert (but cheap) young hacks who normally cover other sports.

Not content with this, Bondy and Skippy have sent in another squadron of writers – Oliver Clive, Austin Peters, Charles Carrick, Matthew Hannah, William Gray, Perry Crooke and Dan Harbles. These chaps are cheaper still: because they don't exist. It's a glorious wheeze – take some agency copy, stick a fake name on the top and add huge Getty Images pictures. Hey presto, a cricket page which costs almost nothing.

Cod bylines would not be so bad if they were disguising the name of a genuine writer present at the ground – that's hardly new in newspapers – but simply tarting up agency copy below a made-up name is a fraud on the readership. And *Telegraph* readers are beginning to notice that they are getting less and less – in both quantity and quality – for their 90p…

16 April. The paper covers the important opening day of the county championship with brief dispatches from those top writers Peters and Clive, on duty at Leicester and Chelmsford respectively.

17 April. Almost an entire page is taken up by a picture of the sky at the Rose Bowl at Southampton. Clive is still at Chelmsford, while Peters (who filed nothing yesterday) is back at Leicester for the Northants game – while, somehow, simultaneously managing to report on the opening of the world snooker championship in Sheffield.

24 April. The gang of fakes are out and about again – Oliver Clive at Canterbury, Perry Crooke at Derby, and Dan Harbles at Bristol just in time to see Essex beat Gloucestershire. Harbles has never written about cricket before: he is supposedly the *Telegraph*'s cycling correspondent. The fact that Dan Harbles is an anagram of "handlebars" gives the game away: he, too, is a figment of Skippy's imagination.

29 April. Charles Carrick is at Taunton for the start of Somerset's game against Durham. On the same day, the versatile chap also reports on a controversial penalty in a game between Spurs and Manchester United.

30 April. Oliver Clive has taken over at Taunton. Perhaps Carrick collapsed from exhaustion after being in two places at once the previous day. But he soon perks up…

2 May. Carrick is now in Sheffield covering the snooker while at the same time writing about a football match between Wigan and Bolton. Austin Peters also seems to have lost interest in cricket: he is allegedly in Girona covering the Spanish Open golf. Oliver Clive is missing, presumed drunk. Dan Harbles has cycled off into the sunset. Only Matthew Hannah struggles on, "at Headingley", from which he sends a cursory account of Yorkshire v Worcestershire.

How long can they maintain this con? There were signs of panic at the *Telegraph* sports desk last week when the *Eye* started making inquiries about the ghostly platoon of imaginary hacks. Bondy and Skippy may carry out a mass cull in the hope of averting a scandal. But that has its own pitfalls. Without all those phoney bylines, readers would know what they already suspect: that the paper's once-famous cricket coverage has become, quite literally, a charade.

HAZEL BLEARS' slim survival hopes aren't helped by the contrast between her arrangements and those of more virtuous cabinet colleagues Ed Balls and Yvette Cooper.

When the married couple were investigated by parliament's standards commissioner last year over their domestic arrangements – main home in Castleford, second one in London facilitating handy expenses claim – they were found to have broken neither the spirit nor letter of the law, partly because they had "followed the logic" of treating the London house as their second home by paying capital gains tax when they sold it.

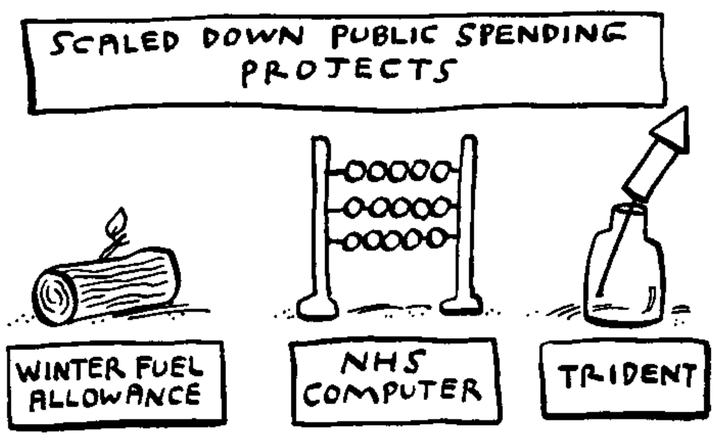
Blears, on the other hand, can only claim that, while treating her London pad as a second home in order to trouser the exes while calling it her principal residence to escape CGT, she hasn't broken any rules. Which is probably true given that HM Revenue & Customs says: "An individual is not obliged to nominate the dwelling house which is factually his or her main residence as the residence which is to attract relief [as principal residence]". Wonder why parliament has been happy to keep that whopping loophole on the books for so long?

GORDON BROWN claims he can save between £4bn and £7bn by spending more on IT. But why is he so optimistic that computers will save him cash, given the government's experience of IT contract cock-ups? Perhaps it's because his adviser on IT works for one of the biggest, but not best, IT contractors.

The promise to save billions is made in the "Operational Efficiency Programme", the money-saving prospectus launched alongside the budget. The chapter on "Back office and IT" was written by one Martin Read – who, like Brown's other efficiency adviser Gerry Grimstone, works for struggling private equity firm Candover (see last *Eye*).

Read does have real IT expertise. He was chief executive of computing firm Logica from 1993 to 2007, Logica being a major subcontractor on BT's troubled £500m NHS "connecting for health" deal. Also, in November, Siemens announced that it would be employing Read on its advisory board. Siemens is enthusiastic about government contracts, but made a mess of the Home Office immigration service and passport office IT and back office systems in the late 1990s.

Public-sector workers and those who rely on them had better hope Read is right about relying on IT to cut costs. His report says the Treasury should "take the estimated annual saving" of around £7bn "into account when determining departmental settlements". In other words, the government should cut public spending based on IT savings that have not yet – and may never – happen.



CALLED TO ORDURE

THE MEMBERS of a Commons select committee took time off from counting their cash and organising their expenses receipts recently to gang up on a youngster who dared to question the high salaries of public sector executives.

The bearded young man in question, who was appearing before the public administration committee (PAC) as a witness, was Ben Farrugia, part of the Taxpayers' Alliance, a low-tax pressure group often quoted by newspapers too lazy to do their own research on government spending. The PAC was looking into executive pay in the public sector; and Farrugia, in his mid-20s, was nervous – with good reason, as it soon turned out. He was wearing what looked like a brand new suit and his hands trembled as he gulped down a glass of water.

Facing Farrugia were seven MPs and five clerks, all on the public payroll. His fellow witnesses were *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee, Tony Travers, a languid LSE academic, and David Clark, spokesman for the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives. In other words, Farrugia was the only person on the pitch outside the pro-public sector consensus. The room leant heavily to the left.

Gordon Prentice (Lab, Pendle) was outraged, chiefly, that the leader of his local council earned £125,000 a year. Do we maybe detect a little envy? Then Charles Walker (Con, Broxbourne), a discordant and temperamental fellow, tore into Farrugia and his colleagues at the Taxpayers' Alliance. "Do you regard yourselves as the witchfinder-general?" he screamed. "You seem to exhibit rabid hostility to anyone working in the public sector." It was odd to hear this from a member of a political party which has set its heart on public sector cuts, but with his large majority in Hertfordshire, weirdo Walker can probably diss David Cameron and the Tory leadership without fear of losing his seat.

Committee chairman Tony Wright (Lab, Cannock Chase) was soon beating into Farrugia, giving his organisation a hard time for not opposing tax avoidance. Farrugia opened his mouth and out came a surprisingly deep voice. He explained politely to Wright that the Taxpayers' Alliance was opposed to tax evasion but there were plenty of other pressure groups devoted to that issue. His lot's focus was on public sector spending and that was what they intended to continue exposing to scrutiny. When answering Walker, Farrugia's tone was that of someone who has been on an anger management course and knows how to speak to people with illogical gusts of bad temper.

Clark, on the sweaty side, raised his eyes to the heavens. He seemed to find it hard to contain his scorn for the youngster from the Taxpayers' Alliance. His hands, too, were shaking, yet he affected a breezy familiarity with the committee and tried to bluff his way through the discussions as an experienced man of the world. He kept insisting that everything was fine in the world of council chiefs. As it no doubt will remain until they are given a harder time by parliamentarians.

As Travers put it: "Might not the ministers who appoint people to quangos hold them to account? If there is a failure, it is in holding of these bodies to account by parliament."

Farrugia, having made the case that people like Clark and other top public figures were paid far too much money, was asked by Prentice: "What do you consider a massive salary to be?"

Farrugia, without hesitation: "Anything over £100,000."

When it was suggested that some private companies were paying top executives revoltingly high sums, Farrugia did not rise to the bait by defending fat-cat salaries. The name of Tesco's Sir Terry Leahy was raised. This brought a squawk from Broxbourne's short-tempered Tory, Charles Walker: "Sir Terry Leahy is a constituent of mine and has generated huge returns for pension funds!"

Farrugia said he was more concerned about the increasing numbers of middle-ranking council employees now "creeping into the £50,000 salary bracket". A mere 50k? That would barely be enough to pay for a new bathroom in an MP's second home.

'Gavel Basher'

THE huge pressure on public finances must surely mean less ending up in the pockets of consultants and "outsourcers", no? Er, not if the companies have their way.

Just days after the chancellor demanded further efficiencies of £9bn a year, the *FT* reported the consultants gleefully rubbing their hands. Among them was none other than Capita, the company that screwed up criminal records, individual learning accounts and various local authority services.

"It is extremely good news for us," beamed chief executive Paul Pindar. "We can come in and produce immediate 20 to 30 percent reductions in cost, while producing better quality."

Really? The *Eye* asked Crapita for the evidence on which this claim was based as it's all too likely to be swallowed by a gullible government keen on spewing out spurious "efficiency" statistics. The response was simply to ignore the cock-ups and point to a couple of apparent winners – the teachers' pension scheme and the coal health compensation scheme that now supposedly cost less to administer than when the government ran them. As most such routine admin jobs have already been outsourced, it's not the most convincing bid for more public cash.

BARACK OBAMA seems to be following up his G20 promise to clamp down on tax avoidance with legislation to reclaim $210bn of tax dodged by multinationals offshore. "Obama purge on offshore havens," screamed an *FT* front page last week. So are Alistair Darling and Gordon Brown honouring their side of the bargain? No, they're doing the opposite.

In his budget last month, Darling decided to exempt from tax money sent back to the UK by multinationals' offshore subsidiaries, giving a huge incentive to the likes of Barclays and other renowned tax avoiders to divert profits to tax haven companies. What's more, the taxman's best defence against such tricks – a 58-year-old law requiring companies to get their offshore deals cleared in advance – has been scrapped after lobbying from the CBI. Less than four years ago the then treasury minister Dawn Primarolo rebuffed Tory/CBI attempts to remove the rule, which, she said, "was introduced to counter tax avoidance… it has done that successfully and should not be repealed, as it protects a great deal of revenue". Now Darling has caved in.

The loss of "a great deal of revenue" is estimated in the budget smallprint to reach £350m a year. Some experts think it will be even more. Whatever the figure, throwing hundreds of millions to the biggest tax avoiders is an interesting post-G20 step, to say the least.

BOOKS FOR SCOOLS
JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO GET KIDS READING PB 9
Sunday Times

IN MARCH, Livingstone Labour MP Jim Devine told parliament: "My information is that Mr Peter Bennett, Network Rail's head of human resources, is presiding over a culture of fear and bullying. Long-serving staff are being forced out, but only after they have signed confidentiality clauses that prevent the culture of fear from being exposed in the public domain."

Since then, Bennett's management style at Network Rail has been splashed across the Sunday papers. Network Rail paid out an estimated £500,000 to one of its human resources managers after she alleged in a tribunal that a Network Rail exec was accused of offences including calling women in his department as "blonde honeys", calling a black, female employee "a silly f***ing black bitch" and dismissing a female employee who he knew was undergoing IVF treatment. All grim stuff.

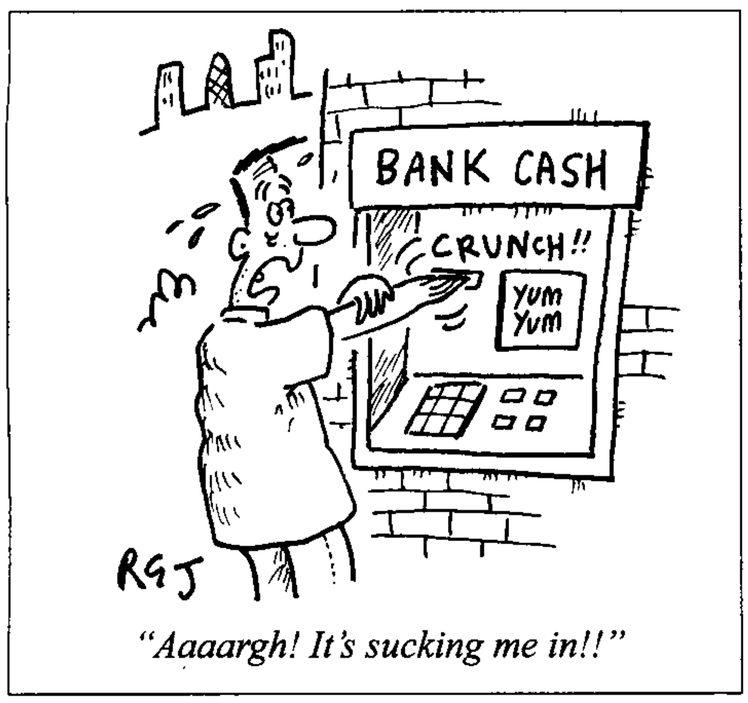
So how embarrassing to discover that Alistair Darling made the very same Peter Bennett one of the five members of the Council of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) in 2007. Darling, then the trade and industry secretary, described Bennett as one of the "leading figures from the worlds of business" and he was certain Bennett's "experience will be extremely valuable to the work of Acas in the years to come". Advising employers how not to discriminate against, bully, intimidate or otherwise behave badly is one of Acas's primary functions.

IN FEBRUARY the government finally wound up an eight-year experiment in court punishments, where offenders who breached the terms of community orders lost 25 percent of their benefits.

Ministers justified the decision to axe the trials running in Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Teesside and the West Midlands, saying they had not produced the advantages that had been anticipated – the costs of running the scheme were £5.60 for every £1 of benefit saved.

Quite why it took the government so long to realise the trial didn't work is a mystery, as the probation union Napo and others working in the field had been telling it so for years. One detailed evaluation in 2004 found that not only was it not cost-effective, but some offenders, suddenly unable to pay domestic bills, had resorted to, er, crime.

How surprising, then, that one great idea in the welfare reform bill in the Lords this week is to withdraw benefits from unemployed drug offenders who fail to be assessed, tested and treated. With huge waiting lists for treatment, it's doomed before it starts.



"Aaaargh! It's sucking me in!!"

ST Mary's Church, Weaverham, is holding an organ recital on Friday, April 24, at 7.30pm.

Resident organist and choirmaster Bob Owens will prevent the entertainment, and there will be a collection in aid of the Chester Cathedral Choir.

Northwich Chronicle

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

EXCITEMENT is building in anticipation of 27 May, when the European Commission will present its post-G20 summit solution to the financial supervision failings that allowed the banking crisis.

According to commission president José Manuel Barroso, it will largely be based on a supposedly independent report by French former central banker Jacques de Larosière.

The commission's register says De Larosière's advisory group is composed of "academics", but this is not quite true. In fact the group is made up of bankers and regulators, including Sir Callum McCarthy, who was chairman of the UK's Financial Services Authority between 2003 and 2008.

As McCarthy left the FSA in the wake of the Northern Rock failings, he might seem an odd choice to advise on the future of financial supervision in Europe. And this impression might be reinforced by the information-gathering meetings held by De Larosière's group – all were with, er, bankers and regulators.

THE European Council is refusing to reveal details of how it spent its 2007 budget, despite its promise of transparency and threats from the European parliament to delay approval of its accounts.

MEPs have accused the council of having "black accounts" in its €594m budget – 8 percent of the entire administrative budget of the EU – which is spent on organising EU summits and ministerial and other meetings. Though the council denies any malpractice, it failed to attend a plenary meeting of the European parliament to discuss the accounts, claiming that it was nothing to do with anyone else how the council's general secretariat spent the money, half of which is used to pay the salaries and benefits of its 3,200 staff and one fifth on working groups for minor officials. Although the council has had informal budgetary meetings with the parliament since 2005, it is not bound by any EU law to disclose budget details.

AN investigation into excessive disability claims by EU civil servants has been dismissed because of incompetence by the EU anti-fraud squad, Olaf.

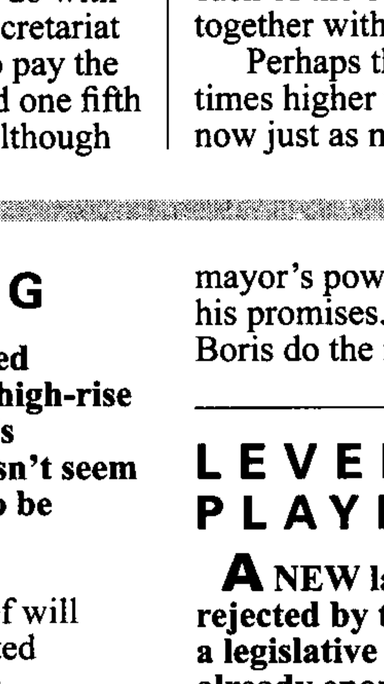
An internal audit revealed that 230 civil servants, one fifth of the workforce of the EU Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy, had claimed a total of €5.7m in disability benefit for alleged accidents between 1996 and 2002 – an average €25,000 each. The audit showed that 43 employees suffered nine or more accidents each between 1986 and 2003, which even dozy Olaf agreed "could appear, at first sight, to be suspect".

Since work conditions at the Research Centre on Italy's peaceful Lake Maggiore were normal, a former director told Olaf of his surprise at the ease with which EU benefits could be claimed, thanks to a lack of independent medical advisers.

Despite the apparent lack of solid evidence for their claims and relatively minor injuries, 23 employees had received more than €50,000 between 1996 and 2002, with a couple getting €300,000 and eight others some €80,000. However, when 14 of the civil servants took their case to the EU's Civil Service Tribunal last month, accusing Olaf of making baseless accusations which attacked their reputations, and of depriving them of a defence, the court found in their favour and accused Olaf of "failing to understand the fundamental principle of the right of defence" before it reported the suspects to the Italian judiciary. The judges annulled the investigation and ordered the commission to pay each of the 14 claimants €3,000 damages, together with court costs.

Perhaps the disability claims which were four times higher than in any other EU workplace will now just as mysteriously decrease.

EU-phemisms



The Berlusconis

LONDON CALLING

BORIS JOHNSON may have painted himself as London's saviour from the high-rise excesses of the Kenocracy in last year's mayoral election campaign, but it doesn't seem to have taken long for the blond one to be seduced by Livingstone's pisspoor architectural values.

This week London's bumbler-in-chief will finally decide whether plans for an isolated 31-storey skyscraper designed to replace London's largest and most diverse street market can go ahead. More than 100 street vendors and hundreds more shoppers and residents have been campaigning for years to stop the destruction of the Queen's Market in Newham by developers St Modwyn, whose plans to build the tower block on their market have been approved by the council.

Of course, given Boris's election pledges to stop the "inappropriate" spread of high-rises and to preserve the viability of small shops, refusing the £75m scheme, which offers traders no protection from exorbitant rents and will therefore kill the market, should be the mayor's obvious move. Unfortunately, all the signs are that he will approve the deal and sign the market's death warrant. Last year deputy mayor Ian Clement wrote to the developer to confirm that the scheme would be acceptable if the design quality of the tower could be "further demonstrated", but raised no objection to the tower itself.

At Newham's own planning meeting, the scheme's supporters openly boasted that Simon Milton, Boris's right-hand man and London's head of planning, intended to approve the plans. Despite all this gun-jumping, it is still in the mayor's power to turn down the scheme and keep his promises. Only one question remains: will Boris do the right thing? Find out next week…

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS

A NEW law to protect playing fields was rejected by the Welsh assembly last week, after a legislative committee insisted there were already enough safeguards for green spaces in Wales. A few miles from Cardiff Bay, meanwhile, public playing fields and parkland at Rumney Recreation Ground are under threat.

Cardiff city council wants to build a new high school on the park, with what remains becoming the school's playing fields. There will be no community access during school hours or without the school's permission. The school will replace Llanrumney and Rumney high schools, both of which currently have large playing fields, with large parts of both sites being sold for housing. At Rumney High, just a small corner is to be kept green as a "public park", according to planning documents.

Campaigners say the loss of the fields, the only good quality flat site in the area, will have a hugely negative effect on the health and well-being of the community and that "once built on, the grounds will be lost forever".

The Rumney Rec site isn't the only bit of green space under threat in Cardiff. Residents are also outraged by plans to convert part of their riverside Sophia Gardens park into a car park to house Sky TV trucks during cricket matches at the neighbouring SWALEC Stadium.

ITV

The South Bank Show (ITV1)

AN OLD Fleet Street editor once said that there were certain solemn and worthy commentators whose columns went largely unread and yet readers liked the idea that they were in the paper (these pundits, oddly, have often been called Jenkins) and might stop buying it if they were not.

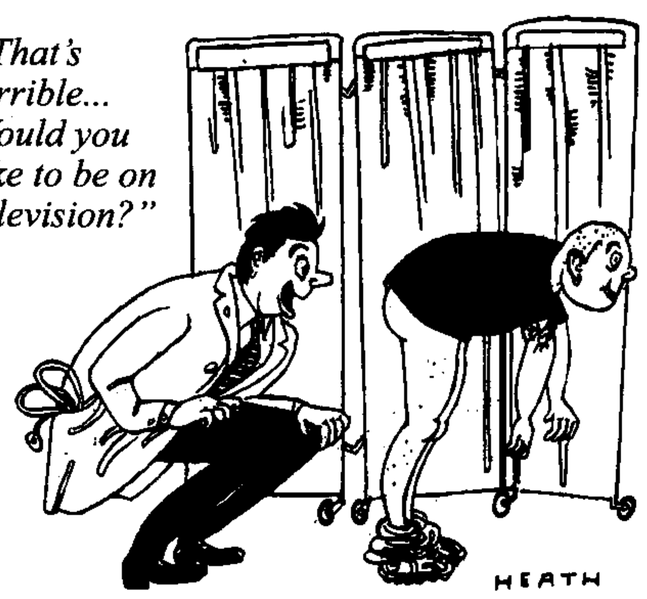
A televisual equivalent of this is **The South Bank Show**. If all the critics, bloggers and TV executives who have expressed horror over the loss of Barg's arty show in the past week had actually watched the programme, its audience would have been so large ITV would never have axed it. But, although the number of viewers attracted by the series was small (only going above a million for the George Michaels and Paul McCartneys), the *SBS* had huge symbolic power beyond its puny figures for viewers and advertising revenue: as a statement that ITV wasn't just in it for trash and cash. So the fact that ITV has axed the series reveals the artistic and economic basket-case that Britain's second terrestrial channel has become.

And have no doubt that *The South Bank Show* has been axed.

Amazingly, some weekend papers still repeated the ITV press release line that the series is finishing because Barg is retiring from ITV or, conversely, that the network was "desperate" to keep the *SBS* but sadly could only offer a budget reduced by 80 percent. Let's be clear about this. An employee offering someone a fifth of their current deal has decided in advance that they want that person to go. Barg is retiring because *The South Bank Show* was cancelled – not the other way round.

There is a view, which ITV flacks tried to push when they realised the media coverage was against them, that the show has become a series of tired puff interviews with pop stars and that it was time for the franchise to go. But, ever since 1978, Barg has been playing the game with ITV's shareholders and advertisers of giving them singers they have heard of to balance out the novelists they don't know about.

Inconveniently for anti-Bragg spinners, the new series started this week with a pair of profiles about Nigerian novelists. And the line that ITV arts coverage needed to be refreshed would only make sense if a replacement were in place: in fact, the network seems happy to give the impression that it will have no cultural coverage once Barg's show goes.



"That's terrible... Would you like to be on television?"

The effect on the telly ecosystem is severe because the *SBS* represented more than half of the arts documentaries shown annually on the major channels. And its departure may also threaten at least some of the surviving percentage. It's well known that BBC1 and BBC2 have only scheduled arts shows to the extent that they have because of the constant shaming speeches and articles from Barg pointing out that he was doing more for the genre at a commercial network than his public service rivals seemed able to achieve with the licence fee. So, if the corporation's efforts were only underwritten by competition, what will happen now that there's no need to compete?

The most cynical possibility is that the BBC will keep arts television at or below the current number of hours while scoring political points by bringing Barg in to front some of them. Intriguingly, the corporation issued a statement within hours of ITV's announcement, saying it was keen to talk to the deposed *SBS* host about possibilities.

Observer media pundit Peter Preston eccentrically suggested that the Beeb might buy up the *South Bank Show* title (as it did with *What the Papers Say*) and get Alan "Botney" Yentob to present it; but the far more likely scenario is Barg taking over Botney's current BBC1 strand, either under the *Imagine* title or another one.

Beneath a surface bonhomie at the Edinburgh Television Festival and culture ministry receptions, Barg and Botney are deeply wary and competitive with each other, and their joint presence in the BBC arts unit could bring benefits not just for the corporation's cultural coverage but also as material for a compelling sitcom or observational documentary.

Back at ITV, there's inspiration only for a tragedy. With grim circularity, Michael Grade, who commissioned the *SBS* at LWT three decades ago, will now be stepping down from programming responsibilities at ITV during the programme's final season. What will pass for arts coverage at ITV in the future will be Simon Cowell trying to find singers he can make money out of.

One of the innovations of Barg's show was the acceptance that television itself was an art form: shows were given to the histories of *Brookside* and *Coronation Street*. So a fitting end to *The South Bank Show* might be an edition in which Barg interviews himself about the risk that his departure represents the end of serious television at ITV, and potentially at other addresses as well.

'Remote Controller'

MEDIA NEWS

A FEVER of indecision spread across the BBC over what to tell viewers and staff about the dangers of swine flu.

"Swine flu has challenged us to think hard about our public service role on this kind of news story," wrote Mary Hockaday, head of the multimedia newsroom, on the "Editors' blog". "Essentially, our task is to give you the facts; to give you the best scientific and medical information and to inform but not to alarm."

No one seems to have told health correspondent Fergus Walsh, who at one point terrified viewers with dire warnings, cowering in a laboratory to report that: "Er, there is great cause for concern."

Generally the BBC's news coverage referred viewers to government advice, including that for people returning from Mexico "there is no need for you to isolate yourself from other people as long as you remain well". Er, unless you work for the BBC, that is. "As a precautionary measure, all BBC people returning from Mexico are required to stay away from the workplace for seven days," staff were told last week.

For history presenter Dan Snow, this meant "quarantine" in a luxury flat in Kensington on his return from filming in Mexico City, at a cost to licence-fee payers of £250 a night. Five days after arriving in London, he had still not had a medical check-up and was reporting, er, no symptoms.

Confused? There were more mixed messages to staff. According to the safety tsars of the BBC's "Human Resources, Safety and Business Continuity teams": "You may be concerned about the stories in the press about the outbreak of 'Swine Flu' in Mexico over the weekend. This is to reassure you that there is no cause for alarm." Still, the BBC's "deployment teams" weren't taking any chances. Their advice to staff covering the story? "You should be mindful of keeping an eye on any possible change in your health, ie sniffles etc… If interviewing anyone with suspected swine flu then the advice is to do this through glass."

NEWS that communities secretary Hazel Blears had criticised Gordon Brown's leadership on 3 May produced an interesting array of headlines in the media.

The *Observer*, who ran her critical article, led with: "Hazel Blears Savages Gordon Brown over 'Lamentable' Failures". The story was picked up by Sky News: "Brown Gets 'Titanic Battering' From Blears", said its online headline. But the BBC, struggling perhaps with a bank holiday "B" team, saw the story rather differently, following a phone call to Number 10.

"Blears denies criticism of Brown", was their early take, replaced after an interview with Alan Johnson ran on the BBC's Andy "Red" Marr show with: "Brown Best Man for PM – Johnson".

Number 10's media-watchers were delighted.

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC1

Anne Robinson: People who sunbathe wearing large sunglasses are said to have eyes like which rare Asian mammal?

Contestant: Penguin.

AR: Which British composer wrote The Lark Ascending and The Wasps Overture?

Contestant: Er… Beethoven?

BBC Radio WM

Danny Kelly: Which prominent Birmingham family had a toposcope constructed in 1923 for the top of Beacon Hill in the Lickey Hills?

Caller: The Osbournes.

AD NAUSEAM

THE *South Bank Show* has been cancelled from next year because, ITV says, it is simply too expensive to make.

But some films are still deemed worth making. Take, for example, the 90-second rebranding epic "Beach", which launched just less than a month before the *South Bank Show* was axed and is being shown on television, online and in cinemas.

David Pemsel, group marketing director of ITV, said of the film, which features sunshine everywhere: "The ITV1 brand is synonymous with optimism," which is deeply ironic at a time when ITV's woes have never been more apparent.

One way to turn things round might be to spend less on marketing and more on programmes. ITV's advertising account is worth £20m. The new rebrand comes on the back of a £3m rebrand in 2006, which itself followed a rebrand in 2003. Any charges that ITV is spending too much on marketing and not enough on programmes will hardly have been assuaged by the announcement a fortnight ago that while ITV is ditching Bragg and his show, and axing jobs left, right and centre across programming, it has recently strengthened its marketing team with the appointment of Rob Farmer, a former ad man, as director of viewer marketing.

VIRGIN Trains' new TV ad features a cameo from Richard Branson as a tattooed oik. It's a fleeting appearance, but Virgin's PR department has been flogging it for all it's worth. The line is that this is the first time in a decade Branson has appeared in one of his company's TV ads.

"Ten years ago I sort of decided on purpose to let [Virgin] companies stand on their own two feet," said Branson. "I have done things like *Superman Returns* and *Casino Royale* but there can be such a thing as too much of a chairman of a company and it is sometimes good to let products speak for themselves."

Shome mishtake, shurely? In 2005 Beardie appeared as a "plastic surgeon" in an ad for Virgin Money credit cards. The same year he presented "recruitment schemes" for his Virgin Vie cosmetics company. In 2000 he ran along a beach taking his clothes off to push Virgin Direct. And on top of the TV appearances of course Branson regularly crops up in films and TV shows, writes "personal letters" that appear as press ads, and, er, so on. Branson's entire business strategy depends on keeping himself centre-stage. It is, in fact, vintage Branson to maintain his profile by claiming the opposite.

TOUGH times for Phorm, the "targeted advertising" firm caught snooping on BT's customers (with BT's agreement), in a secret trial of its tech (*Eyes passim*).

Thanks to Phorm, the UK government faces EU legal action over its pisspoor handling of internet snooping, while freedom of information documents reveal that the Home Office consulted Phorm's lawyers while preparing a paper on whether the technology would be legal.

In a recent Lords debate on electronic surveillance, Lib Dem Baroness Miller told security minister Lord West it was shocking that officials had emailed Phorm's legal rep in January 2008, "offering the company the draft paper for comments on exactly how targeted online advertising would comply with [the law]".

Maybe all this explains the company's launch of the bonkers StopPhoulPlay website, filled with pages of ranting, lambasting campaigners against online snooping as "Privacy Pirates" orchestrating a smear campaign.

The new man in charge of Phorm's PR is one Patrick Robertson. Phorm confirmed to IT news site *The Register* he is the same Robertson who did PR for General Pinochet and Jonathan Aitken. Robertson's other past non-successes include his role as chief spokesman for Sir James Goldsmith and the Referendum Party and improving the image of Chechnya (*Eye* 963).

Robertson will have at least one familiar face at Phorm: former chancellor, Pinochet supporter and fellow Bruges Group member Norman Lamont, who joined the company's board as a non-executive director a few months ago.

GOING LIVE

COLIN Brazier of Sky News proved he had a keen snout for a big story and a clear sense of priorities when the flu pandemic story broke.

"Breaking news coming in: a third of the world's population may catch swine flu, according to the WHO. John, you've got a wicket for us, before we leave the sport..."

EIGHTY-EIGHT more jobs are to go at the BBC, 49 of them in newsgathering, the sharp end of the BBC's news operation.

The redundancies were announced, once again, by email. Director of news, Helen Boaden, reassured BBC staff that "we've been working together and with the trades unions to develop our plans" – a statement the NUJ and BECTU, the main broadcasting unions, both flatly deny.

Eye readers will recall that in the recent dispute with BBC World Service, now resolved after a management climbdown, Boaden told staff that only "29 percent of NUJ members voted" in the strike ballot. In fact 38 percent voted overwhelmingly for a strike and an apology swiftly followed.

As they wait for another apology from their remote controller, BBC News staff are digesting the implications of the latest cuts. Journalists who bring news into the BBC will bear the brunt this time, especially in foreign bureaux. While that means less news will be "gathered", a whole tier of "multiplatform" teams has been hired to share less news across the BBC's output, pointlessly filming radio interviews and re-cutting radio and TV packages for BBC Online. "We should be producing fewer stories but delivering greater impact across all platforms," says Boaden, surrendering more of the public-service remit in the process.

Viewers of the BBC News channel are used to news anchors reading "Breaking News" stories from wire services rather than BBC correspondents. So expect more of that. On the up-side, however, these news stories "gathered" on the cheap from agencies will be more available to BBC viewers "on demand, online and on your mobile".

BIRTSPEAK 2.0

BBC Training & Development are running a series of Multi-Platform Awareness workshops. By the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Describe the production process implications of creating multiplatform content
- List the implications of software development on the creative dynamic
- Describe several collaborative creative processes for creating content on alternative platforms
- Describe different visualisation methods for preparing content for different stages of editorial sign-off

Money For Old Rupe

LUVVIES

Drew Barrymore refused to see friends and family for three months to prepare for her latest role. The actress, 34, wanted to make her portrayal of Edith 'Little Edie' Bouvier Beale, cousin of Jackie Kennedy Onassis, true. "I took it beyond seriously. I felt it was fraudulent to talk on a cell phone and then pretend I'm this person who wouldn't even know what one was."

Metro

Submitted by Katrina McWilliams.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

CRUELLY omitted from last year's edition of the glossy wallchart, "Who's Who At the Top of the BBC" (see *Eye* 1203), Alan Yentob has ensured a prime position at the top and just to the right of Mark Thompson for 2009.

This reveals that he is apparently the only person responsible for "Creativity" in the entire corporation, as opposed to 19 bigwigs in charge of "Direction", 12 overseeing "Finance", 11 responsible for "Operations" and eight keeping an eye on "Marketing, Communications and Audiences".

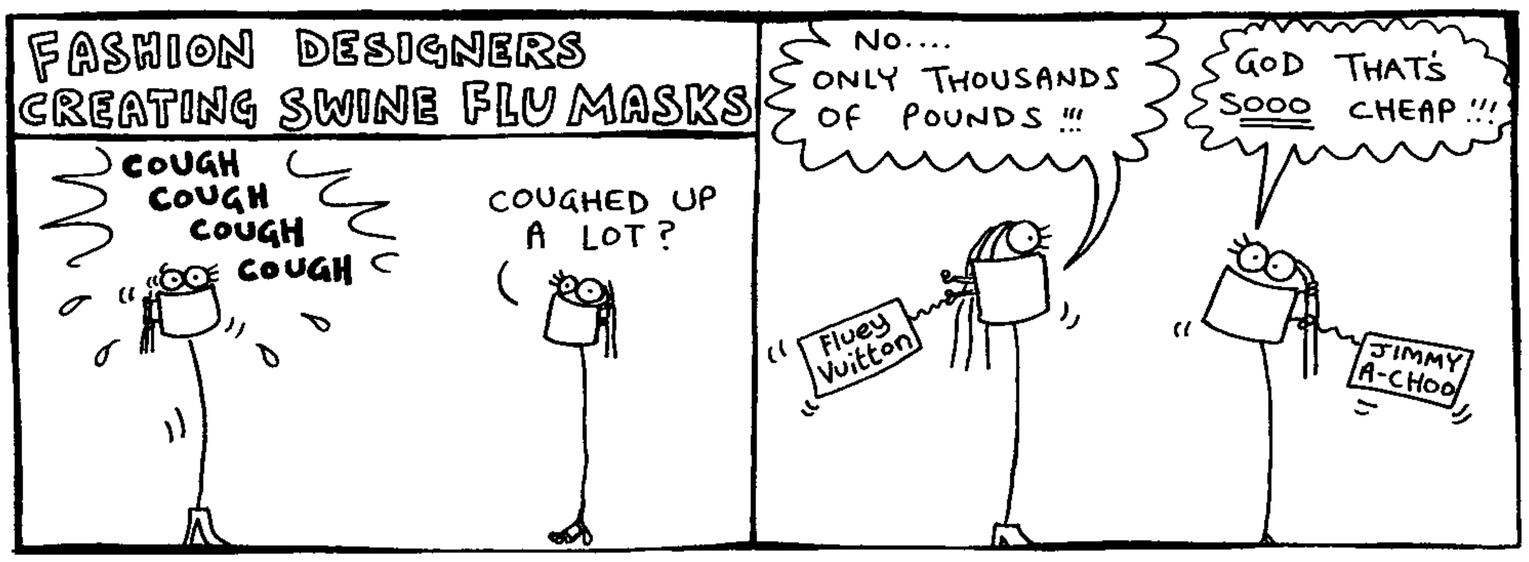
NUMBER CRUNCHING

20% Budget Melvyn Bragg was offered to continue the South Bank Show, as a result of which he is leaving ITV

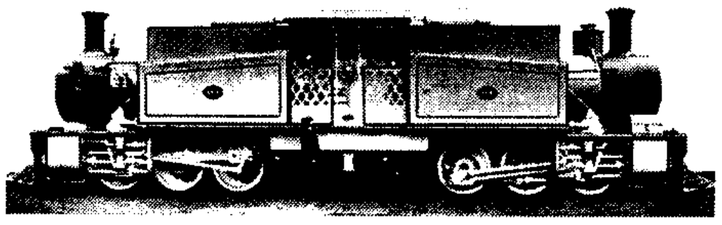
2 million Fee Cheryl Cole has been offered for "golden handcuffs" contract, as a result of which she is joining ITV

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


FASHION DESIGNERS CREATING SWINE FLU MASKS
COUGH COUGH COUGH COUGH
COUGHED UP A LOT?
NO.... ONLY THOUSANDS OF POUNDS !!!
GOD THAT'S SOOO CHEAP !!!
Fluey Vuitton
JIMMY A-CHOO

SIGNAL FAILURES



The strife of Brian

STAGECOACH founders Brian Souter and Ann Gloag are suffering in the recession. Despite 660 precautionary job losses at Stagecoach's South West Trains, the siblings are down to their last £473m, the *Sunday Times* reckons.

The City is worried about potential SWT losses if revenue doesn't grow as Stagecoach expected when the franchise began. The government agreed at the time to cover half the losses (or 80 percent of them if revenue is more than 6 percent below forecast), but not until 2011. Stagecoach has gone to arbitration after the government refused an earlier start to the payments. It also wants car-park charges excluded from the revenue figures used to calculate the payments, which the government has refused.

The sound of officials saying "no" is alien to Souter's ears. Nobody stopped him using methods that were "predatory, deplorable and against the public interest" (in the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's words) when building his bus empire. The SNP dropped its policy of regulating buses – to rein in the likes of Stagecoach – after Souter gave the SNP £500,000; even Scotland's Labour opposition acknowledges the difficulties of regulation, as it's "inconceivable that Brian Souter would agree to it" (*Eye* 1215).

Virgin Trains, half owned by Stagecoach, has had massive bailouts (*Eyes passim*) while failing to deliver its promised 140mph upgrade but retaining its protection against competition. The first big bailout was hurriedly granted by the Strategic Rail Authority in 2002. Stagecoach was then in financial trouble, its share price having dropped by more than 90 percent, and Virgin had promised to pay the government franchise premiums from 2002-3. Questioned by MPs, SRA boss Richard Bowker said the bailout was a "stabilisation package" for Virgin Trains. When an MP noted that Stagecoach had "an AGM very rapidly after this [bailout] discussion took place", Bowker admitted: "The timing of Stagecoach's results announcement was important."

The first SWT rail franchise, awarded to Stagecoach by John Major's government, was one of the most generously subsidised. The next franchise gave taxpayers a chance to cut their largesse; instead, in 2003 Bowker's SRA agreed to raise SWT's annual subsidy by 370 percent (*Eye* 1089). It wasn't until the third SWT franchise, from 2007, that Stagecoach faced running trains without shedloads of subsidy.

PS: As chief of National Express Group, Bowker is now desperate for a government stabilisation package as revenue falls short at National Express East Coast (NEEC), connecting Yorkshire and Edinburgh to London. How has Souter responded in Bowker's hour of need? By launching a budget service that competes against NEEC, using road coaches from York, Doncaster, Bradford and other places which connect with Stagecoach trains from the midlands to London.

READERS have reported more examples of train firms using ticket vending machines to try to overcharge passengers (*Eye* 1234).

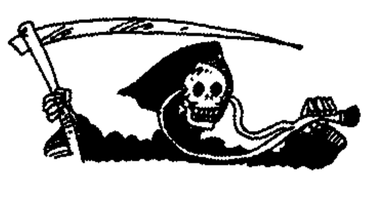
One found SWT machines that don't issue off-peak tickets until 10am, when such tickets become valid. He risked missing his 10.02 train (doors closed at 10.01) if he waited until 10 to buy. The alternatives were splashing out on a peak ticket or queuing behind some 25 other passengers to buy an off-peak ticket from one of the clerks who survived SWT's cull of 660 ticket-office and other staff this year.

Even at 3.45pm, another reader wanting a return to Thetford found vending machines at King's Cross offering only the £68 peak fare. He had to queue at the ticket window for the £33.50 off-peak fare. "Nowhere in any signage on or around or in the machine was it made evident that a cheaper ticket was available," he says.

Another reader says the latest bright idea is placing vending machines low enough for wheelchair users to reach easily, "forcing the rest of us to adopt a simian crouch as we try to work out which ticket we're supposed to buy… not a bundle of laughs for the many of us who have back or knee problems".

'Dr B Ching'

MEDICINE BALLS



A week argument

JOHN BLACK, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, strayed off-message at the recent Patient Safety Congress in Birmingham: "Patient choice doesn't work. The one area where quality and safety have improved year-on-year is the one area where patients don't currently have any choice: cancer care."

His observation is backed up by an analysis by the Picker Institution and the *Health Service Journal* which found that, a year after patients were given free choice to go wherever they wanted, most still go to their local hospital and there is no evidence yet that choice is driving up standards.

Black was also dismissive of the current obsession with data protection and confidentiality, saying: "Some hospitals won't allow doctors to email scans and x-rays to each other. On wards, vital information like temperature charts and blood-pressure readings are locked away so no one can look at them. And often patient names aren't even displayed above the bed, which makes life very confusing for the cardiac arrest team."

But Black reserved particular ire, and several bright yellow slides with red lettering, for the European working time directive (EWTD), which means that junior doctors are not allowed to average more than 48 hours a week from 1 August: "It was designed for Spanish lorry drivers and is making the NHS far less safe, with dangerously thin layers of medical cover, poor training and multiple handovers." Black trained in an era when junior doctors might be on duty for more than 120 hours a week (admittedly not always working), and is clearly outraged by anyone doing so little: "Surgeons can't be safely trained for the future and provide a safe level of cover across the NHS with a 48-hour week."

Not everyone agrees. There is good evidence that the fatigue of long hours and sleep deprivation affects a doctor's performance, and the NHS has had 11 years to prepare for the 48-hour legal limit. Some hospitals, such as Homerton in east London, hit the target over a year ago, but it required a change in consultants' hours from 9am-5pm to 8am-10pm (they get paid for it), putting them in charge of emergency admissions and making space for training. But above all, you need sufficient junior staff to work the day- or night-shift system.

This is where the EWTD seems to be falling apart in parts of the NHS. Last year's cock-up over junior doctors' job applications left a big dent in the hospital workforce as many left for Australia and New Zealand, or jumped ship to general practice. And the sending home of Asian doctors combined with the falling pound, which has made the NHS less attractive to European trainees, has left gaping holes in many rotas. Across the country, some specialties are operating with less than half the required number of junior staff, with knackered consultants desperately having to backfill the shifts. Or not. When M.D. qualified in 1987, it was not uncommon for a single junior doctor to be left alone to cover dozens of patients across many wards at night. Fast forward 22 years to the Mid Stafford fiasco, and a single, very junior surgeon was left alone to look after every surgical patient in the hospital at night.

Safe staffing levels are the key to patient safety, and the EWTD was supposed to be introduced alongside a consultant-led service where supervision was always available and training opportunities were maximised. Some hospitals have had the foresight to implement this. Those that haven't have no chance of hitting the 48-hour target in two months' time but will have to look as if they are. Without sufficient staff, medical cover will go from dangerously thin to non-existent in parts.

For once, the Royal College of Surgeons may have a point.

M.D.

ECO-GNOMICS

Gushing oil

AN advertising campaign promoting the Malaysian palm oil industry is taking greenwash to dizzy new heights.

Last month, under the heading "Palm oil: the *Green* Answer", the *Economist* carried an extraordinary full-page puff which gushed: "What makes palm oil so attractive is that its production puts minimal strain on the environment.

"The industry's practices are held to high environmental standards and the Malaysian Palm Oil Association is a founding member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), which defines standards and monitoring criteria for the sustainable production and use of palm oil."

Really? The RSPO has been such a monumental failure since its creation five years ago that many of its member companies, which include UK supermarket chains and food companies like Unilever, have all but given up on it. Paralysed by conflicting positions between growers of palm oil and buyers, not to mention green campaigners, the RSPO has been unable to prevent the rampant logging of primary rainforest and draining of peatlands to enable the expansion of this so-called "green" crop.

Nowhere has the relentless growth been greater than in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, where vast areas of pristine forest have been lost, contributing to climate change and threatening vulnerable species like the orang-utan and proboscis monkey. In Malaysia it is estimated that more than 80 percent of deforestation between 1995 and 2000 was caused by palm oil expansion.

Worse is to come. Having exhausted much of their own land, Malaysian palm oil operators now plan to expand in the Brazilian Amazon rainforests, driven by growing demand for the crop for food, cosmetics and biofuels. The new ads are part of an aggressive campaign to counter the exposure of palm oil practices by the likes of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. There is even a "Palm Oil Truth Foundation", an absurd industry front that calls environmental campaigners "sinister" and suggests the groups are "faces of evil".

Will the advertising regulators fall for this blatant greenwash? Two years ago the Advertising Standards Authority ruled that a TV spot on BBC World proclaiming Malaysian palm oil as "sustainable" constituted false advertising and upheld a complaint by Friends of the Earth. Though the new print advert is peppered with the italicised word "green" throughout, let's hope the British food and cosmetics companies that buy palm oil don't fall for it.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

SLOUGH OF DESPOND

A TIMELY reminder that Labour politicians have no monopoly on corruption. On 1 May six Tory activists from Slough, Berkshire, were jailed for up to four-and-a-half years for rigging hundreds of postal votes at the 2007 council elections.

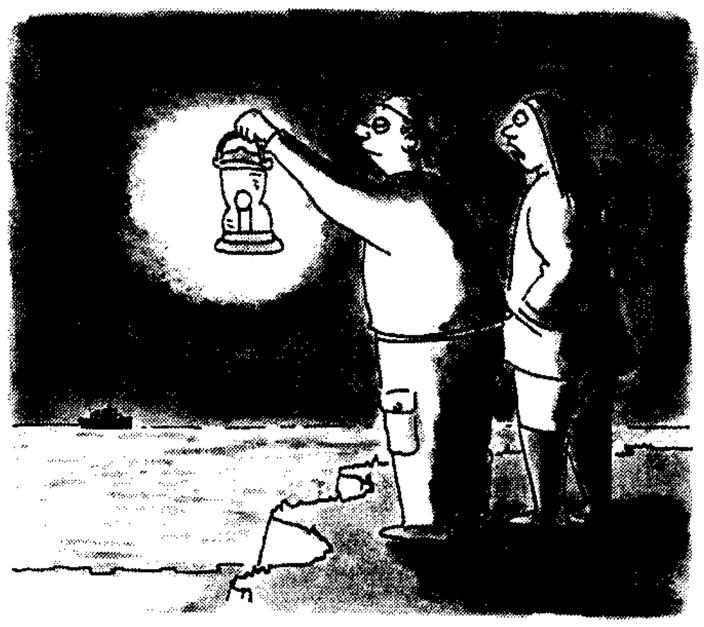
Inspector Knacker investigated after Tory candidate Raja Mohammed Eshaq Khan, 52, unexpectedly defeated Labour councillor Lydia Simmonds in the Central ward by 120 votes. Khan admitted conspiracy to defraud the returning officer and perjury and was sentenced to a total of three-and-a-half years. Up to 19 names had registered at numerous individual addresses and then "voted" by post. Tory worker Mohammed Basharat Khan, who filled in at least 198 postal voting forms personally, was jailed for three years and four months.

All the names of the phony voters were Asian and *all the convicted* men were of Pakistani origin. But it would be wrong to attribute what happened solely to the importation of "sub-continental" election practices. Prosecutor Charles Miskin quoted a report last year by the electoral commissioner, Richard Mawrey QC: "The systems to deal with fraud are not working well, they are not working badly. The fact is there are no real systems. Until there are, fraud will continue unabated. The system for voting would disgrace a banana republic."

Local Tory bigwigs cannot pretend they were not warned, as a rummage through council archives reveals. On 6 February 2007 – three months before the corrupt election – Slough Labour councillor Raja Zarait asked the then Tory group leader in a Conservative / Lib-Dem coalition, Dexter Smith, the following question: "Given that [Slough borough council] staff are prevented from photocopying more than 20 pages themselves without specific permission from a manager… how do you justify Conservative activists being given access to council facilities by elected members of your group, in order to make countless copies of postal vote applications using the council's paper and energy supply?"

Cllr Smith replied dismissively: "I find your question completely lacking any credibility… I assume the reason you are raising this as a question rather than putting this as a complaint through the proper channels is that you already know you cannot substantiate your claim." *Whoops!*

● MORE chaos in Labour ranks in the London borough of Barking & Dagenham, to the satisfaction of the 12-strong BNP opposition. The last *Eye* reported that seven Labour councillors had been deselected. That number has now risen to 12 – all of whom are to appeal to the London Labour Party. Meanwhile council leader and *Eye* fan Charles Fairbrass has decided not to stand in 2010. He intends to don the mayoral chain for his last year as a councillor, leaving the way open for his deputy Liam Smith to take over. With a divided Labour group and 12 BNP louts to deal with, Smith will need all the charm, tact and sound judgement he has so far failed to show any sign of possessing. Last year he was cautioned after calling the mother of a Tory councillor a "fat fucking dyke" at an emotional by-election count (*Eye* 1217). Cometh the hour, cometh the 19-stone, heavily tattooed man...



"I know it's good to rediscover forgotten skills in a recession – but wrecking?"

CORNISH PATSY

MYSTERY surrounds the whereabouts of a report into a fiasco that cost Cornish taxpayers millions of pounds and which could seriously affect the chances of the county's ruling Lib Dems in next month's elections.

It is the result of an inquiry by Sir John Mills, a former chief executive of Cornwall county council, into who blundered over the transfer of the former St Mawgan RAF base from the MoD to the council last year.

Cornwall council – since last month a "unitary" council, its subsidiary district councils having been abolished – owns the adjoining Newquay airport but the RAF handled all air traffic and safety matters. When the RAF departed the council had to apply for a licence from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to operate the airport.

Despite the council spending £6m on advisors to help guide it through the transfer, the CAA had concerns about air traffic control, fire cover and runway maintenance and refused to grant the council a licence. The airport was closed for three weeks and flights diverted before the CAA was finally satisfied, causing losses to operators such as Ryanair, which now intends to claim hundreds of thousands of pounds in compensation from the council.

The Mills report was due to be delivered in March, but council chief executive Kevin Lavery says he hasn't had it yet. Anyway, he says, the council is now in the six-week period of pre-election "purdah" during which councils are not supposed to publish any material that might influence the outcome of that election. So publication must be delayed to avoid "considerable media and political interest" – and we can't have that, can we?

Yet councillors tell the *Eye* that senior officers have told them the report was received on 21 April – two days *before* purdah kicked in, which would have given the authority the opportunity to distribute it, hold a meeting and give the public the facts before the election. Clearly someone's memory is playing tricks.

PARKING PLONKAS

HOW sick do you have to be to qualify for a disabled parking permit in Lambeth?

Douglas Groves, 70, had a heart by-pass operation four years ago and subsequently suffered renal failure, requiring dialysis three times a week. Two strokes have left him unable to walk more than 50 yards before becoming so breathless he has to sit down.

When he applied to renew his blue badge parking permit, Lambeth's compassionate jobsworths fixed a date to interview him three days after his current permit ran out. Then, on the day it expired, without warning they turned up at his house, towed his car away and charged him £250 to get it back.

Despite a GP's letter outlining Mr Groves' life-threatening disabilities, Lambeth's Mark Plonka (yes, really), "customer services manager (interim), accessible transport", says Mr Groves does not now meet any of the criteria needed to secure a disability parking permit – even though his health has deteriorated since he last qualified.

Steve Davidson, "assistant investigations officer, parking services", concluded that Mr Groves had "committed a serious offence", but, graciously, the authority had decided it was "inappropriate to institute proceedings". The £250, which the pensioner can ill afford, was a "civil matter", he was told.

Lambeth said new national rules introduced in 2008 had tightened up the criteria for parking permits. Mr Groves had been examined by an "independent physiotherapist" who decided he didn't qualify. How a physiotherapist can overrule a doctor's concerns about renal failure, a heart condition and stroke, it has failed to explain.

Sats results: keeping up with nationional average

Standards at Essex schools are risising

Manningtree & Harwich Standard

ABSENT FRIENDS

AS the *Eye* went to press absentee Skidrow-on-Sea councillor Paul Lainchbury who, we revealed last issue, takes so little interest in council affairs he no longer bothers to claim his allowance, had still not resigned, despite the uproar caused by our story.

Even the dozy Brighton *Argus* reported it after the *Eye* appeared. The problem for Skidrow's Tories is that a by-election would risk their one-seat majority, so council leader Mary Mears wants Lainchbury to hang on. Councillor Fiddler, the character played by the late Sid James in *Carry on Girls*, would surely have approved: he also plied his trade in a fading seaside resort, the aptly named Fircombe, rather than Brighton.

● ONE absentee member who *has* done the decent thing is former Lambeth Labour councillor Sam Townend, who has resigned after it was revealed he had claimed more than £10,000 in allowances in the past year yet had only attended two council meetings. To be fair, it is a bit awkward for him to get to Lambeth Town Hall from his current address in Bristol, where he hopes to be a shoo-in at the next election to replace retiring Labour MP Doug Naysmith in his Bristol North-west constituency.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

HOLDING AN 'AT HOME' SÉANCE WAS A GREAT IDEA!
IS THERE SOMEONE IN PARTICULAR WHOM YOU GENTLEMEN WISH TO CONTACT?
YES – MY GRANDMOTHER. WE NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT SHE DID WITH HER FABULOUS COLLECTION OF PRE-WAR CASSOULET PANS...

NOOKS and CORNERS

MORE on the supermarket giant Tesco (latest profits: £3bn-plus), whose ambition to double in size every decade is meeting opposition in Paisley.

There are already more than 1,770 Tesco stores in Britain – 250 in London alone – and not everyone regards the expansion of this voracious quasi-monopoly as an unqualified boon. There have been at least 130 campaigns against planning applications for new stores (one is ongoing in Hadleigh, Suffolk: see *Eye* 1213); but as Tesco can afford to appeal against refusals and take its cases to the highest courts (as well as to tempt and browbeat local councils), these usually end in defeat for opponents. But not always.

In Paisley, just outside the centre, Tesco wants to build a 130,000 sq ft superstore on the road that connects the town with the M8. If approved, it could finish off the ailing and struggling Clydeside town. Should we care? Yes. Paisley may have a bad press, but it is an ancient and interesting place – the Roman *Vanduara* – and its former thread industry provided the fortune that launched Lord Clark of Civilisation. Paisley has its Abbey (*Eye* 1183) and a number of seriously good Victorian and Edwardian buildings. And if it really needs another supermarket (which it doesn't), there is the vacant Arnott's building in the centre, opposite the Abbey, designed by the excellent local architect James Steel Maitland.

Back in 2005, Tesco applied to build a 80,000 sq ft store in Love Street in Paisley. This was opposed by Renfrewshire council because of the damage it would do to the economic health of the town centre, where there were already two supermarkets. But the council's resolve faltered when Tesco offered to pay for a new stadium for St Mirrin's Football Club. This time the proposed store on a different site is even bigger – and there is no bribe, sorry, "planning gain", on offer.

In December Tesco applied to build a 130,000 sq ft shed in Renfrew Road, plus a car park for 700 cars and a petrol station. Incredibly, the idea came from cash-strapped Renfrewshire council itself, which owns part of the site and can sell it to Tesco for £4.75m. Never mind that the store would run counter to two policies in the local plan, designed to "support the vitality and viability of the town centre".

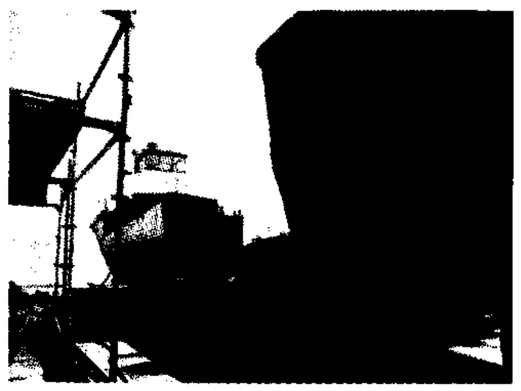
How this proposal can be in the public interest is hard to see. Naturally Tesco claims its store will create 600 jobs; but how many jobs will be lost when businesses in the centre of the impoverished town, already suffering in the economic downturn, close? Such is competition, of course; but if the store does go ahead, in addition to the one for which permission has been given in the former car-manufacturing town of Linwood, Tesco will own 57 percent of the supermarket floor area in and around Paisley.

Given the implications of climate change, can it be a good thing to encourage more car use? Owing to supermarket distribution networks, we already know that much of our food travels around the country unnecessarily. Moreover, Tesco makes its huge profits by paying low wages, paying its suppliers late and adopting other anti-social practices.

Fortunately, perhaps, the final decision will involve the Scottish Executive as Renfrewshire council can scarcely be impartial if it owns part of the site. But, for all their environmentalist posturing, Scottish ministers seem to prefer money to amenity if their enthusiasm for Donald Trump's proposal to despoil part of the Aberdeenshire coast with a gratuitous golf course development is anything to go by. So good luck to STOP (Stop Tesco Owning Paisley).

MEANWHILE Liverpool, last year's European Capital of Culture, continues to generate scandals. The latest concerns the Wincham, a coaster which had operated on the Mersey, the Weaver and the Manchester Ship Canal before being rescued and preserved by the Wincham Preservation Society.

Thanks to a £47,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, this historic "Weaver Packet" was restored and found what was meant to be a permanent home in and around the Albert Dock. However, on 1 April, M.V. Wincham made what seems to have been her last voyage from the dock to a slipway at Bromborough Shipyard where she is being broken up, having been sold for £5,000 – for scrap. This is because the Wincham Preservation Society is broke and could not afford the £40,000 needed for repairs and maintenance.

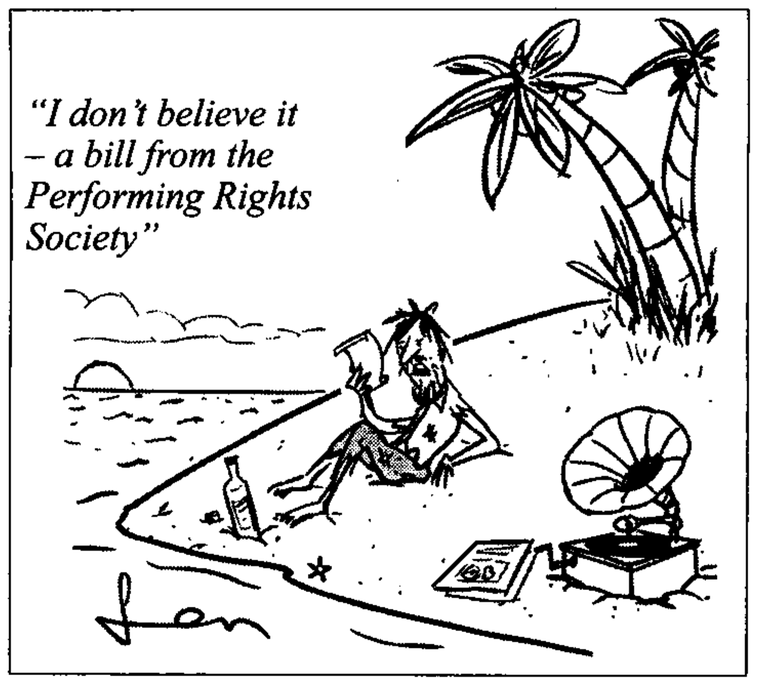


Broken up: M.V. Wincham

Until recently the society received most of its funds from the Friends of National Museums Liverpool as the Wincham, as an historic Mersey vessel, was a suitable ornament to the Albert Dock, home of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. But the Friends were disbanded last year after falling out with Dr David Fleming, the thrusting director of National Museums Liverpool, leaving the society with no income.

Given the hype about Liverpool and its history, the Maritime Museum might have been expected to rescue the boat; but no. And now the Heritage Lottery Fund, not unreasonably, wants its money back. Yet again Liverpool has shot itself in the foot. Dr Fleming, of course, is the man behind the gratuitous new £72m Museum of Liverpool which is disfiguring Pierhead, a World Heritage Site (Eyes passim), and who subsequently fell out with its Danish architects. What a master of public relations he must be.

'Piloti'



MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE UK Border Agency, woefully inept when it comes to keeping out terrorists, seems hellbent on bringing British opera to its knees.

The refusal of an entry visa to the stage director of ENO's new *Cosi fan Tutte*, Abbas Kiarostami, was widely reported. So what if he is an internationally acclaimed film-maker, photographer and painter who has spent a year setting up this ENO project. To the immigration jobsworths he's still an Iranian. The result is chaos for his *Cosi*: the last weeks of rehearsal are being run by an assistant director passing on instructions from Kiarostami in, er, Paris.

Worse is the case of Australian-born Marylyn Abbott, who founded one of Britain's most delightful country-house opera ventures. A world-famous horticulturalist, she came to Britain 16 years ago to take a long lease on West Green House, Hampshire: a National Trust pile which she restored and turned into one of the finest, showplace gardens in southern England. She also set up West Green Opera which runs every summer, gives superb opportunities to young singers and takes on repertory most other garden operas wouldn't dare.

She's done Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*, Walton's *The Bear* and Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnol*. Last year, she brought over an entire company of young Swedish singers from Drottningholm for a period-staging of Haydn's *Mondo della Luna*. All very commendable – but not to UK immigration.

For the past 16 years Ms Abbott has lived here perfectly legally, paid her taxes and made a significant contribution to British cultural life. But she's remained Australian. Last year a problem arose with her residency status and she was told to go back to Australia to sort it out. It seemed a minor technicality, so off she went with no more than "a few clothes in a little black wheelie", expecting to come straight back.

But immigration refused her re-admission on the grounds that she hadn't the means to support her life in England and would be a burden on taxpayers. To describe this as bizarre would be an understatement. The authorities have now, finally, changed their minds. But it's taken seven months, during which everything Abbott has achieved at West Green has been imperilled. This year's operas will go ahead… but only just.

RED FACES at the Royal Opera House, where two Elijah Moshinsky productions have been revived to mixed reviews.

In response, someone claiming to be the stage director has been turning up on blogs and websites very, very angry indeed about everything and everyone. Attacking the House itself, he says he never wanted the productions revived and that he's sick of shouldering the blame for the "systemic failure" of a company "at the point of breakdown". He has complained about lack of rehearsal time, lack of a proper lighting regime, ever-changing stage crews, a conductor who was "a dead turbot" who "can't hold it or pull it together", and so on.

Could these furious rants really be from Moshinsky, an eminent director with a long track record? "I'm afraid they are," sighs someone at the ROH. "And I do wish he'd stop."

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

It's cynical, gimmicky and superficial!
TORIES' COOL BRITANNIA? CAMERON WOOS EMIN AND OTHER ARTISTS
And why did he pick on us?
SHRUG

Letters

A doctor writes

Sir,

... Is "Swine Fever" (Cover, Eye 1235) an accidental or deliberate mistake? Surely Muckspreader would have told you that there is the world of difference between Swine Fever and Swine Flu. Swine Fever is a highly infectious febrile disease of pigs and other members of the Suidae. *It does not infect any other species including humans. It usually kills and is generally diagnosed only at post mortem. It is preventable by vaccination. Swine flu does not affect pigs but can be carried by them and appears to be fairly readily transmitted to humans.*

DR DAVID ROBERTSON,
Adelaide, Australia.

Lookalike

Sneezer

Tucker

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the astonishing resemblance between the man spreading dangerously toxic particles on the front of the official government information about Swine Flu, and Malcolm Tucker, the man officially responsible for spreading dangerously toxic government information in The Thick Of It and In The Loop?

Yours faithfully
ENA B PREPARED,

Summit of taste

Sir,

Re Banned Aid (Eye 1223) and last year's G8 Summit. It was not in the Japanese capital Tokyo, but rather at a fabulously expensive hotel in the resort of Toyako where world leaders got together to discuss global poverty, worldwide food shortages and whatnot while munching their way through an eighteen-dish, eight-course dinner that was lavish even by Japanese standards of hospitality.

Yours faithfully,
DOMINIC AL-BADRI,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.

Blog off

Sir,

I read the article in Hackwatch ("Blog Standard", Eye 1235) this week with a mixture of pleasure and irritation. Mostly, it was the former; however, it was rather ruined by the slight fact that you associate Paul Staines's commenters with the "blogosphere".

Kindly don't do that. A large part of the "blogosphere" as you put it thinks Staines is an utter cunt, and his commenters to be even worse.

Try Googling "Tim Ireland" some time.

Regards,
JOSEPH EDWARDS,
Via email.

Causing a fence

Sir,

Regarding C. Carr's little anti-Israeli rant (Letters, Eye 1235) about the security fence and academic boycotts.

India built a wall dividing Kashmir long before Israel. 84,000 people, mostly Kashmiris, have died in this conflict, far more than the Palestinians. I haven't noticed anyone calling for a boycott of Indian academics.

Yours faithfully,
MRS C. CAPLAN,
Via email.

Sir,

In denying the charge of anti-Semitism, C. Carr (Eye 1235) rather misses the point.

*Like most Jews, I have no problem as such with people who feel that the Palestinians have been badly treated. The problem is that those same people are, almost always, blandly unconcerned with far greater injustices (Tibet, Darfur, Zimbabwe, etc.) and with the fact that Israel faces enemies who deny her very right to exist. To clamour for sanctions **only** against the Jewish state is unfair: and it's impossible to believe that some of that clamouring isn't prompted by bigotry towards Jews per se – especially since certain critics of Israel (eg at the Durban conference) use terms that Hitler would be proud of.*

To see anti-Semitism everywhere is paranoid, but to see it nowhere is naive. Double standards are unjust, no matter how C. Carr tries to rationalize them.

Yours faithfully,
DAVE WHIPPMAN,
Via email.

Fangs for nothing

Sir,

Interesting to note that the new Wolverine film managed to earn the succinct and I suspect somewhat premature review of "pisspoor" in the last Eye (Media News, 1235), printed before the movie had actually appeared in any cinemas (to my knowledge the Eye doesn't have a film reviewer, and so I'm fairly certain that nobody from the magazine was at any of the special press screenings or over in Australia to see its Sydney premiere on 8 April). Having seen the other X-Men movies, they may not be up there with Citizen Kane or Schindler's List but at least I know this by virtue of having watched them, which I suspect in Wolverine's case the Eye had not.

GARY KESTER,
Hartlepool.

Happy days

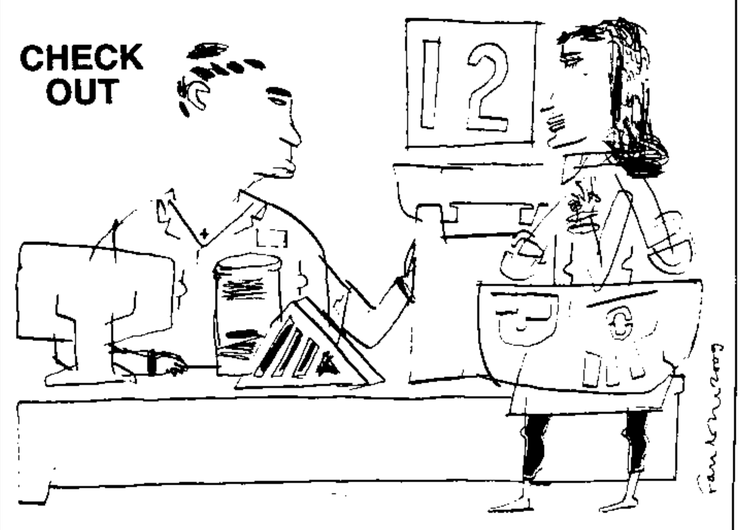
Sir,

[Re: Literary Review on Frances Partridge: The Biography by Anne Chisholm.] Your parody made me laugh aloud. Congrats and thanks.

ANNE CHISHOLM
(Eye staff member 1962-63),
London NW3.

"I hate spring – it makes me feel so happy and lucky to be alive"

Scenes You Seldom See



"Only £2.95? I'll pay cash so I don't hold up the queue by using my credit card"

Uncivil service

Sir,

*Just a quick re-education for Mr Paul Smith ("Silver Service", Letters, Eye 1235). I am a civil servant. I earn £1,100 a month, from which I have to pay my own mortgage, expenses and travel costs. I work 13-hour shifts, starting at silly o'clock, and sometimes all night until 6am. That time is spent between standing outside in all weathers and working in a filthy, tiny Portacabin from which Health & Safety removed the heater and the microwave. I share this luscious workspace with up to seven smelly people (although there are only four smelly seats). I have to do my work training on my days off for no money. I don't have access to a computer, telephone, cooking facilities or a canteen, let alone a sports ground, and I wouldn't get the time out in a day to use them if I did. We borrow the smelly toilet next door. I have a £30 a month pension, which I have to pay. My job isn't for life. I can be sacked (and get threatened with it a lot), but if I was made redundant I **would** be found alternative employment – something like two days a week in furthest Scotland, which they know would be impractical for me to accept.*

*I appreciate that some civil servants are rich, idle, system-workers (I'm employed by a few!) but I reckon my job stinks far more than yours so don't label us **all** as overpaid, untouchable parasites.*

*(Name and address not supplied, because civil servants **can** get sacked!)*

Bully for Bookworm

Sir,

I feel moved to write to you in Bookworm's defence (Letters, Eye 1235 and Literary Review, Eye 1233). Rarely can such well-articulated vitriol have been so well aimed.

Ken Milne wants us to put Jeffrey Archer's so-called literary output in the brainless but harmless category suitable for holiday reading; personally I find the clodhopping style and excruciating dialogue enough to spoil any holiday, but that is only my opinion (which I am happy to find that Bookworm shares). My real objection to the books, which puts them far below the level required even for reading on the beach, is the extraordinarily misogynistic treatment of women (they are either sex objects with brains or sex objects without brains, or else of no interest at all) and his stunted and arid world view, which regards the acquisition of wealth and sexual conquests as primary virtues to which everything else must be subject. There is a smugness in the way he presents this order of morality, too; the "I'm-saved-but-you're-all-doomed", addressed to those of us not possessing the irresistible personal charm and business acumen of the sainted Jeffrey. It's not just painful to read – it's offensive.

Yours faithfully,
LUCY SHAW,
Via email.

Lookalike

Brown

Starkey

Sir,

I had given up all hope that comedian Roy "Chubby" Brown would be allowed an outing for his humour on television, hitherto restricted to the club circuit because of his "controversial" nature. So – unless I am very much mistaken – it was a pleasure to see this scourge of the PC brigade (pseudonymously "David Starkey"?) offering his offbeat take on establishment institutions with his "Henry VIII: Mind Of A Tyrant" on Channel 4.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON CROOK,

Via email.

"I think I must be a member of the sandwich generation – I've had both my kids and my parents put into care homes"

Pseudo Names

... Amidst all the hysteria about swine flu, the two of us were wondering if your readers can recall a similar panic some 20-odd years ago concerning another infection related to farmed animals?

SAM 'N' ELLA.

... I think I might have contracted swine flu! Do you have any idea what my doctor can give me for it?

WAHID BERTH.

... We find Pseudo Names ***quite*** *irresistible.*

O.U.R. AWFUL
BERT I. LIKE-YOU.

... Enough is enough – this feature is worn out and the material included recently is getting thinner and thinner.

FRED BARE.

... I'm glad to see that no one has yet used my name in your Pseudo Names column. Unfortunately it is often being taken without my consent.

JOY RIDING.

... I enjoy reading your Pseudo Names section when not making phone calls on my journeys to and from work.

EAMONN D. TRAYNE.

... I'm bored of this now.

WATSON TELLY.

... It might interest you to know that, every year, I listen with interest to the whole of the Chancellor's Budget Speech, and have done so for the last 50 years.

TERRY FICK-BORE.

... Whilst on one hand I am a keen follower of the Pseudo Names column, I cannot deny the fact that something inside me secretly delights at the thought of its imminent demise.

SADE N. FREUDE.

... Congratulations on last issue's Pseudo Names which reached new peaks of imagination.

MATT ERHORN
BEN NEVIS.

... Perhaps your previous correspondents Lorne Mower and Dan D. Lion would wish to contact me with a view to discussing a gardening project.

IVOR HOE.

... I strongly agree with Lucy Tania, and would like to renew my subscription forthwith.

MANDY LYFFE-BOTES.

... Oo, nooo! What? Pfth! Ay?! Do you think the late, great comedian Frankie Howerd would ever have lowered his standards and joined in with such puerile humour as the Pseudo Names correspondence?

U. ERR (Mrs).

... Please don't put an end to the Pseudo Names feature – we feel it could lead to a welcome revival of creativity and cultural awareness in this country and in Europe.

RENE SONCE
N. LIGHTON-MOUNT.

... I wonder if, like me, any of your readers are finding that they are no longer made to feel welcome in supermarkets?

CARRIE ERBAGG.

... Getting your readers to write the copy and then pay for the privilege of reading it is highway robbery.

STAN DANDYLIVER.

... Thank you, thank you for persisting with Pseudo Names, and allowing my dear wife and I to fulfil a long-held ambition.

IVOR LETT
ERIN D. AYE.

... Pseudo Names has been fun, but I think enough!

N. DOVE-STOREY.

"That bloody cat!"

All is Wobegon

Sir,

Your story in Eye 1235 about Channel 4 giving itself over to Honda seems to have been written by one of the dreamers the car company appears so fond of. For unless Garrison Keillor was doing a sneaky moonlight on the night in question, it is his voice intoning "And now a short film about doers" at the start of the Honda ad, not that of "C4's own continuity announcer".

Try listening to the radio once in a while. You'll probably hate A Prairie Home Companion, but at least you'll learn to recognise what the man sounds like.

Pip-pip!
D. O'NEILL,

Via email.

Pedantry Corner

... Re Colemanballs (1235) and the quote of Jake Humphrey: "Qualification doesn't always tell us who has the quickest car, just who has the fastest car."

The quickest and the fastest are not necessarily the same thing.

The fastest car implies it has the highest top speed. The quickest car (around a race track) will have the optimum combination of speed, acceleration and handling in order to complete a circuit in the shortest possible time; hence be the quickest.

BRUCE BRANDON.

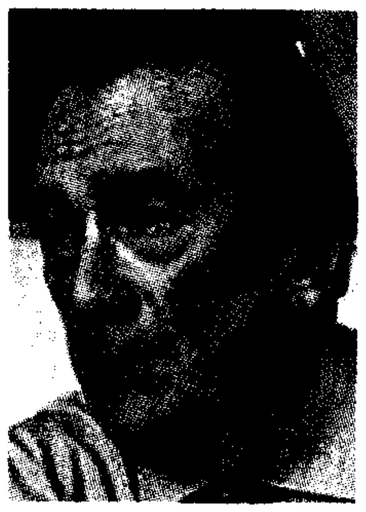
... Re Cameronus's exclamation (p 19, Eye 1235): not "Et tu, Borus?" but "Et tu, Bore (sic)?" Sit up, face the front, pay attention and get a grip. It's perfectly simple. It's the vocative masculine singular of a second declension substantive.

PAUL SPILLANE.

... In Pedantry Corner, Eye 1235, Toby Lewis says that "Schubert was Austrian, not German." When Schubert was born, Austria was part of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation". When he died it was part of the "German Confederation". Therefore he was both Austrian and German.

MICHAEL JUTZ.

Lookalike



Robert Maxwell, former head of Mirror Group Newspapers

Ken Boston, former head of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Sir,

He lives! Run for the hills! Or at least a long way from the nearest yacht railings... OK, a bit thinner, but that's probably what you get after 15 years in a bolthole on Mount of Olives, or maybe in the/at sea...

T. LEAMY,

London N3.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We should allow those who have sacrificed their lives for this country to come and live in this country."
SIR NICHOLAS WINTERTON
(Tony Greenfield)

"They have got a couple of big guns who can put them to the sword."
RONNIE IRANI
(Steve Williams)

"I've never been so certain about anything in my life. I want to be a coach. Or a manager. I'm not sure which..."
PHIL NEVILLE
(Tony Rex)

"We are literally the next cab off the block..."
SEBASTIAN COE, BBC Radio 4
(Mike Morris)

"Best team won, no complaints. But I thought their first goal was offside."
ALAN SHEARER, Sky Sports
(Peter Sharples)

Letter from **Bangkok**

from Our Own Correspondent

THE relentless political turmoil here is increasingly akin to a violent football match, with the winner controlling government and the losers brawling in the street.

Satellite TV networks have shown troops shooting at crowds of angry red-shirted demonstrators, buses blocking the main roads and thick, black smoke pouring from burning tyres. But there is little attempt to explain the huge shift in Thai politics this represents.

Until the government declared a state of emergency (now lifted), supporters of colourful former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawtra, ousted by the army in a military coup in 2006, roamed the streets demanding the current government of Abhisit Vejjajiva resign. Last month, 2,000 self-styled Red Devils, as they call themselves, smashed their way into a hotel in the resort of Pattaya, forcing the cancellation of a meeting of Asian leaders. The security forces, deployed to protect delegates at the summit, simply allowed the protestors unhindered entry.

Mob rule has become central to our politics in recent years. No one plays by the rules anymore. If one side wins elections and forms a government, the other side takes to the streets to bring them down. Last year it was thousands of yellow shirts who occupied Government House, our administrative centre, forcing the then government led by Thaksin's brother-in-law, Somchai Wongsawat, to flee and bringing the country to a virtual standstill. The protestors cut us off from the rest of the world for two weeks by seizing the main airport, leaving more than 300,000 tourists stranded.

Now, in backroom deals, the yellow shirts' political protégés have taken control of the government benches in parliament, and pro-Thaksin supporters are venting their anger in public protests. This is all fomented by their hero, telling them through video-link telephone calls beamed from massive screens to rise up in a social revolution.

For now the red shirts have retreated, and relative calm has returned to the capital; but the *anger remains* and Thailand is more divided than at anytime in its history. At the root of the conflict is the future of Thai democracy, and the monarchy, with the yellow shirts representing royalists, the military and the urban, middle-class Thais who back the current PM. Now that the red shirts' Thaksin is back in exile, he is accused of making an unseemly fortune and employing brutal tactics when in government. But his power base, among millions of rural and urban poor, remains strong.

There is a geographic divide too between the centre and south on one hand – the traditional seat of our royal elites – and the more socially diverse and ethnic groups in the north and east who were disenfranchised for centuries until Thaksin realised their political potential and sought their support.

There is also a battle between modernity and tradition, with Thaksin supporters trying to revolutionise our social and political structures. The timing of this eruption is no coincidence, for the king, who although theoretically is above politics, is the cement that has so far kept the country cohesive, is over 80 and in poor health. When he dies there will be a vacuum – and traditionalists fear a rich, charismatic, ruthless and popular leader like Thaksin will abolish the monarchy altogether. The elite know this threatens their hold on power and will resist as long as they can.

For the moment our future is really in the hands of the "green shirts" – the military. Since their disastrous intervention nearly three years ago, they have been loathe to take direct control of the reins of government, preferring to play "king-makers" in the back room. But the turbulence will not end until the conflict between the modernists and traditionalists is resolved – and that may not be anytime soon.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Twenty-nine-year-old Demetrius Soupolos and his former beauty queen wife Traute wanted a child badly," a solicitor told a court in Stuttgart, "and had spent several years unsuccessfully trying to conceive. When Soupolos went to a fertility doctor and discovered that he was sterile, his wife was distraught, so he asked his neighbour Frank Maus for assistance. Maus was already married with two children, and he looked a lot like Soupolos, so a plan of action was agreed. Soupolos would hire Maus for a lump sum of 2,500 Euros, and in return Maus would get Traute pregnant.

"Traute initially objected to the plan, but was placated by Maus, who told her 'I don't like this any more than you do. I'm simply doing it for the money.' Over the next six months, Maus spent three evenings each week trying to impregnate Traute, a total of seventy-two times, but without success. At this point, Soupolos insisted that Maus should have a medical examination, and the discovery that he too was sterile shocked everyone, especially Maus's wife, who subsequently confessed that he was not the real father of their two children.

"Soupolos is now suing Maus for breach of contract, in an attempt to get his 2,5000 Euros back. But Maus refuses, saying that he never guaranteed conception, only that he would give an honest effort. Which he did." *(Bild [Germany], 22/4/09. Spotter: Alan Ball)*

– ● –

● *"The poor guy in the room is feeling pretty embarrassed and somewhat stupid, of course," hotel manager David Goold told reporters at the Edgewater Hotel in Whitehorse, near Toronto, "but we're not going to hold him liable or anything. After all, he can't really be blamed for what he did when he was half-awake, and under the front desk's instructions, which he thought he was at the time.*

"He was asleep in his room last night when he was woken by a phone call, just after 11pm. The caller identified himself as the front desk, said there was a gas leak in the building, and told the guest it was essential to urgently increase the air flow in his room. He then told him to pick up the room's television and throw it through the plate glass window, then do the same thing with the mini-refrigerator and the other window. The man did as he'd been told, and was then instructed to pull the fire alarm. This woke the hotel's other guests, and brought our staff up to his room, at which point the guest realised that he had been the victim of a pretty ingenious but cruel hoax call.

"I understand that the people responsible for the hoax have been bragging about it today, in an online chat room. The police are investigating. We do not think that it is very funny." (CBC News, 23/3/09. Spotter: Alastair Fairweather)

– ● –

● "Here at HMP Peterhead, there are no in-cell facilities. It's the only jail left in Scotland like it. So once the cell door is locked, if you need to do a number two, you have to do so in a potty that only gets emptied on Mondays and Thursdays. I could not do that – sit in the same room as shit for three days – so (as many of us do) I choose the only other option: a Pony. To do a Pony, you shit on a bit of newspaper, roll it

up, and throw it out of the window. Disgusting, I know, but what else am I to do?

"I know what you're thinking: what happens to all the Ponies thrown out of the windows? Simple. There are guys called Bombers who are paid to clean them up. The shout goes out – 'Send down the Bombers!' and four guys dressed like radioactive men descend the stairs, while many of *the prisoners hum the* theme tune to 'The Dam Busters.' The prisoners have already been paid £2,100 compensation each, because having to slop out breaches their human rights, but it still goes on.

"From a prisoner, HMP Peterhead." *(Prison Phoenix Trust Newsletter, Spring 2009. Spotter: Anon)*

PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 44

From the Desk of the Supreme Leader (Desk claimed legitimately for £177.99 from World of Desks, Brent Cross)

Comrades,

I am sending you this message by the wonders of new British technology.

As Comrades will be aware, I have always been quick to adopt the latest techniques in communications information technology.

By appearing on your computer screen, iPod or Blackberry, I can speak to each one of you personally at any hour of the day or night.

I can thus be accessed 24/7 from anywhere in the world.

Doctors and nurses battling to defeat swine flu, primary school teachers fighting with their pupils, miners toiling in the bowels of the earth to produce coal for our much-needed electric cars, jobseekers fruitlessly looking for work, bankers rushing abroad with their suitcases stuffed with money – all these members of hard-working British families can now have instant personal one-to-one access to the Supreme Leader.

And what is it I wish to tell them?

That your Leader is in complete control, leading the world out of recession and into a stable, prosperous, prudent future built on the principles of fairness and justice for all.

Comrades, do not be misled by all the hysterical and trivial rumour-mongering you have been fed by the Cameronite-Rothermerist-Murdochian-Barclay twinnist media claque.

Their pathetic attempt to divert your attention from my achievements in recent days has been a torrent of irrelevant tittle-tattle about Party members' expenses, second home allowances and other unimportant froth.

All this is just a malicious smokescreen put up by enemies of the State to hide my historic achievements such as saving the world economy, defeating swine flu, improving standards in schools and hospitals, saving hospital flu, defeating standards in schools, improving swine and managing to keep sane at a very difficult time.

Keep smiling,

Gordon Brown

Supreme Leader

A Confession By COMRADE BLEARS

Commissar for Community Cohesion And Regional Regions

I, Comrade Hazel Blears, being of sound mind and of my own free will, at 3am on 4 May 2009, do hereby confess that I have falsely maligned the Supreme Leader by alleging that he was useless and that his superb and much-acclaimed performance on YouTube was an embarrassing fiasco. So treacherous were my comments that I even sank so low as to adapt the words of the most hated former Leader of modern times (with the exception of Comrade Blair), Comrade Madame Thatcher, the so-called Lady of Iron.

When I foolishly and recklessly used the phrase "YouTube if you want to", what I meant was that the Supreme Leader is to be universally applauded by all Comrades for his mastery of tomorrow's technology today. And furthermore, when I described the record of this government as "lamentable", this was a slip of the tongue that was taken out of context by the media. What, of course, I intended to say was that the record of this government is "laudable".

Signed in the presence of Comrade Lord Mandelson, Chief of the Waterboard and Commissar Nick Brown, Chief Whip and Sergeant-at-Arm-Twisting

A Message To All Women Comrades from Commissar Comrade Harman, Deputy Supreme Leader

Comrades,

Like me, you will have observed that the one thing which marks out all the failed, useless, greedy, corrupt bankers who have brought the world economy to its knees is that, to a man, they are all MEN.

Can it be wondered that the conspiracy of the capitalist Lehmanite-Madoffist-Fredtheshredists was run entirely by members of the male sex, driven by testosterone-fuelled greed and rage and protected by the glass ceiling?

That is why I hereby issue the following diktat. In future, the senior positions in all our state-owned banking systems will be allotted to female candidates, to be democratically chosen by myself.

In this way, order will be restored and the message will go out loud and clear to the world that all men in top positions are useless and should be replaced by a woman.

Signed,
Comrade Harman (Ms)
Supreme Leader of the House of Common People

"Laugh and the world laughs at you"

Taken from The Little Brown Book, Chapter 94, 'Going the Extra Smile – Presentational Strategies Designed To Win Over The Masses'.

EXPENSES SCANDAL
DAY 94

Exclusive to Private Eye after reading the Daily Telegraph

1 SIR BUFTON TUFTON Conservative *(North Freebyshire, Scotland)* claimed £90,000 for returfing his croquet lawn at his second home in Market Barkworth, Wiltshire. Also invoiced £210,000 for bag of frozen carrots from Tesco. The Parliamentary Fees Office refused the carrots but allowed an electric toothbrush £17.94 for Sir Bufton's gamekeeper.

2 PATSY JACKET Labour *(Swillett, East Staffs)* claimed £310,000 for holiday chalet in Southwold which she called her "primary secondary residence". Also claimed £1.95 for fly swat. The Fees Office refused a £2 million bill for an extension to Ms Jacket's property "to accommodate a private feepaying school for boarders between 13 and 18".

3 JASPER TROUGH Tory *(Bucksbridge)* claimed £2 million for a new wallet "to put all his expenses in". Registered the wallet in the name of his civil partner Jason Beau-Gusse but was told by the Fees Office that the claim was unacceptable because it was "too small".

4 BARBARA FLOGGETT Labour *(Grasping Under Hande, Notts)* claimed £750,000 for round-the-clock security to protect her from angry taxpayers who wanted to "set fire to her house and string her up for being an MP".

5 SEAMUS O'SHAMELESS Sinn Fein *(Ballyclava, Antrim)* claimed £500,000 for second home in London which he said was necessary for him to fulfil his non-attendance commitment at the House of Commons.

(More names tomorrow and the next day and the one after that if the Telegraph is still running the story)

GLENDA SLAGG
Fleet Street's Queen Of Expenses!?!

■JERRY HALL!!?! What a disgrace!?! This Towering Texan Totty has chickened out of spilling the beans in a book about her life between the sheets with wizened Rolling Stone Romeo Mick Jagger!?! She must be taking the *Mick*!!?! (Geddit?) 'cause she certainly ain't taking the cash!??!

■ JERRY HALL!?!! Don'tchaluvher?!?? This six-foot femme fatale from the Lone Star State has had the guts to tell her greedy publishers to get lost!!?! And for why? 'Cause they wanted all the sleazy details about her life between the sheets with wizened Rolling Stone Romeo Mick Jagger!?!! *(We've had this. Ed.)* No kiss and tell for loyal Jerry! Her luscious lips are sealed!!? Thank Gawd there's some decency left in the world!?!!

■ *HEY MISTER!?!! Want to know what I think?!?? The reason Jabberin' Jerry has had second thoughts about her bedtime stories with the wizened* (I said you've done this bit. Ed.) *is because a certain rock and roll billionaire made her an offer she couldn't refuse – i.e. the wizened Rolling* (You're fired. Ed.)

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's Whitsun Winners!?!

● **Derek Walcott.** He wants to be Oxford Professor of Poetry!?! Hi there Big Boy!?!! Can I come up and see your iambic pentameter!?!

● **Graham Onions.** England's new Mr Cricket!?! Five wickets in your first Test, eh?!? I expect you've bowled a few maidens over!?! Come round and be my night watchman!?! Geddit?!?

● **Tom Henning Ovrebo.** Crazy name!?!! Crazy referee!?!!

Byeee!!

TELEGRAPH HAS STORY SHOCK
Incredible Revelation Rocks Fleet Street

by Our Telegraph Staff **Mr Cheque** and **Mr Book**

THE WORLD of journalism was rocked to its foundations today when the Daily Telegraph ran a good story on its front page.

Gone were the familiar pictures of Kate Middleton and fruity girls getting their A Level results.

Instead, readers gasped at pictures of Phil Woolas and Michael Gove *(Who they? Ed.)* accompanied by detailed accounts of how MPs are fiddling their expenses.

Editor Will Lewis was forced to apologise, saying, "I am very sorry about what has happened. It is true that we paid a very large sum of money for this story, but we did not break any rules."

But not all Telegraph readers were impressed.

Said one, "It's a disgrace. I buy the Telegraph to collect vouchers for a two-for-one Eurostar City Break in beautiful Bruges – and all I get is some story about David Willetts and his light bulbs."

● **Full story and special Telegraph light bulb offer** 94

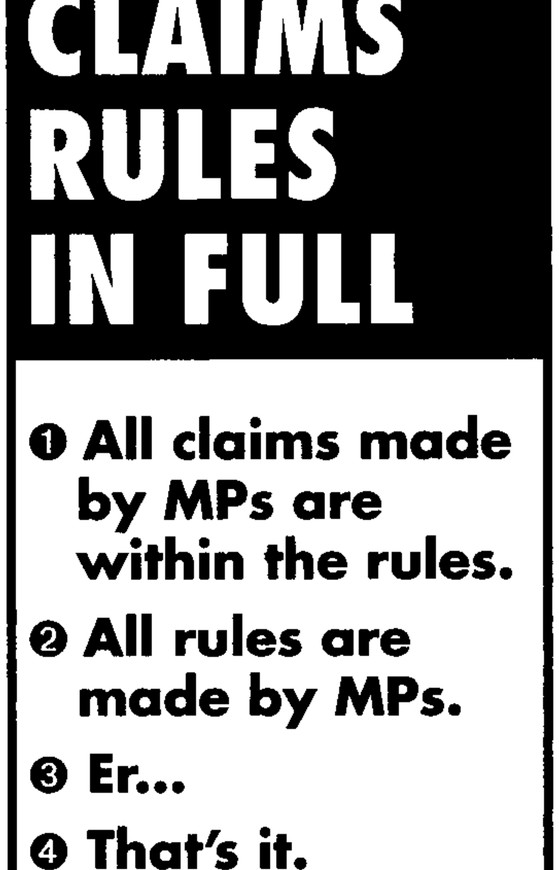
THOSE EXPENSE CLAIMS RULES IN FULL

❶ All claims made by MPs are within the rules.

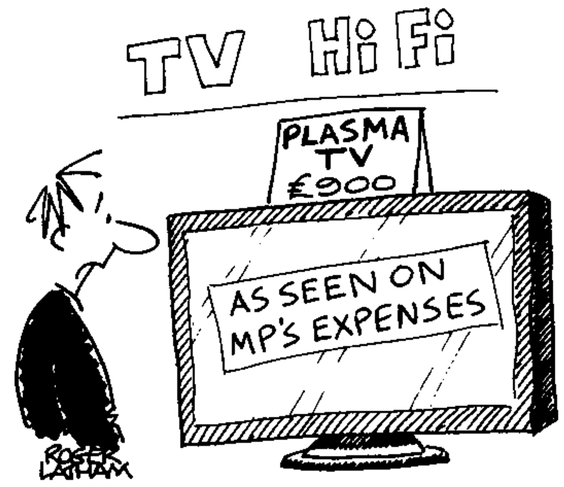
❷ All rules are made by MPs.

❸ Er...

❹ That's it.



"To be honest, we don't care about your policies. How much will you cost?



That Incredible Radio 4 Bono Poem in Full

Bono
by Elvis Presley

Bono – Always on the BBC with his band U2 plugging some new album

Bono – with his silly tinted glasses which he wears indoors

Bono – Irish

Bono – Friend of Salman Rushdie!

Bono – Pretentious, lui?

Bono – Avoiding tax in his home country – whoops!

Bono – Saviour of the planet, saint, hero, God

B-oh-no, it's him again!

© Elvis J Thribbley, Radio 4 (1991)

BBC Radio 3

This week's Opera Special – the new Garsington production of Berlusconi's hilarious comic opera *The Marriage of Silvio*

Act One

The Robber Baron, Silvio, has left his wife the Countess Veronica back in their castle, the Palazzo Sleazio, in order to attend the 18th birthday party of a beautiful peasant girl, the gorgeous Poutella.

He showers her with presents, including a priceless golden necklace. He sings to her the aria *'Zucchero Papa Voglio'* (*'Let Me Be Your Sugar Daddy'*).

She replies to him with the immortal *'Che Sera Sera'* (*'I Would LIke To Be On One Of Your TV Stations'*).

Act Two sees the arrival of the unhappy Veronica who, spying the couple together, flies into a rage. She cries out *'Lothario bastardo'* and then sings the classic *'Nessun Dorma'* (*'You'll Never Sleep With Me Again'*).

Silvio replies to her angry accusations by singing *'No Sono Paedophilio'* (*'She Was 18 And I checked'*). The Act ends with him calling for his lawyers.

Act Three opens with the arrival of the comic legal duo, Carteri and Fucco, who advise the furious Baron that he should sue his wife for defamation (*'Scandalo Magnato'*).

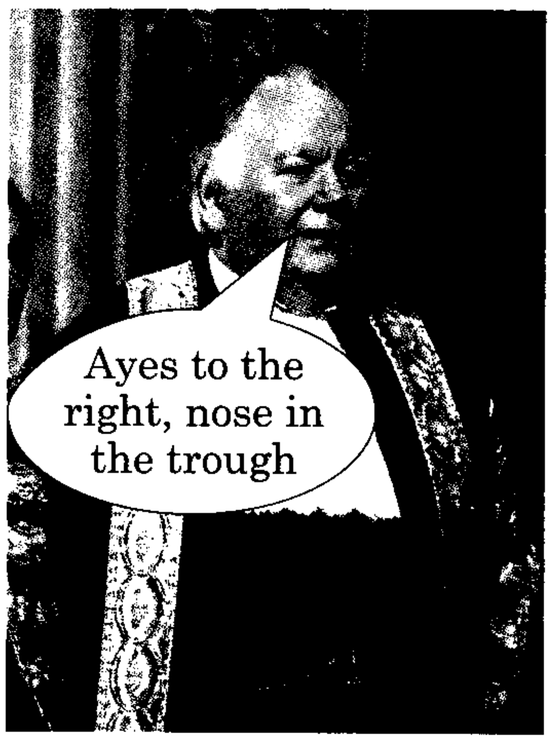
Veronica has meanwhile called *her* own lawyer, Antonio Julio Caersar, who tells her that she will get half his fortune (*'Billione e Tre'*).

As the couple and their respective lawyers are shouting and arguing, there is a clap of thunder and suddenly the terrifying figure of the Pope appears in their midst and drags Silvio down to hell. *(Is this right? Ed.)*

SECOND HOME SECRETARY LATEST

IT WILL END IN BLEARS

SPEAKER SHOCK



BRITON WINS 'WORST JOB IN WORLD'

IT WAS confirmed today that Briton Gordon Brown had beaten thousands of candidates to land "the worst job in the world".

"For the next six months Gordon will be living rent free with a six figure salary on a small island with 50 million other people who hate him and all he'll have to do for his money is make the occasional toe-curlingly embarrassing appearance on YouTube as Prime Minister" said *(cont. p. 94)*

HAVE YOU SEEN SHREDDIE?

IT IS now two months since Sir Fred Goodwin was last seen alive.

He may have been abducted by aliens and could even now be destroying the financial system of the entire galaxy.

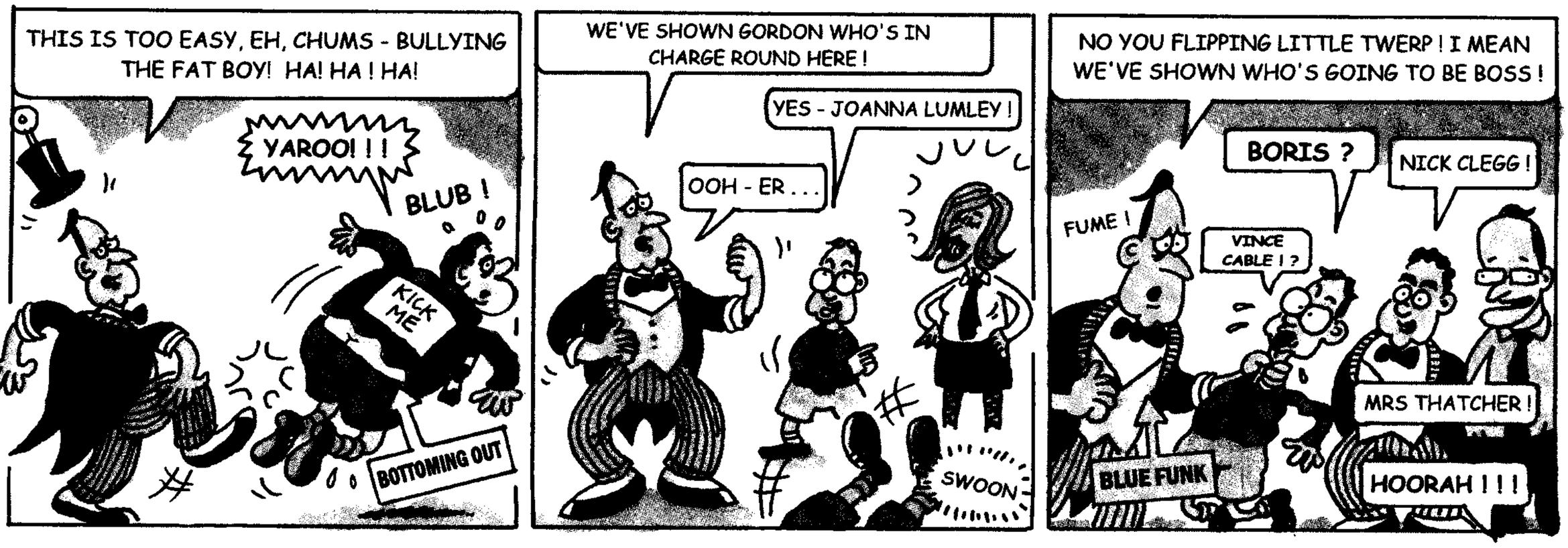
If you think you have seen little Shreddie, ring our Shredline now on 0873 265265 *(all calls cost £750,000 a minute).*

School news

St Cakes

The school has been closed after the Head Girl, Tammy Flu (Virals) returned from a half-term holiday in Cancun, Mexico. All pupils have been sent home, except the overseas borders who have been locked in the sanatorium under 24-hour guard by Matron, Mrs Pam Demic RCN. Sneezers will not be run on June 3rd over Swine Field. There will be no performance of 'Porky and Bess' by the Drama Society on June 12th. St Cough's day will be cancelled, including the prize-giving. Apologies to the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Douglas Hogg O.C. The Leavers' Party will now be a Masked Ball held in the Nightingale Wing of St Swinian's Hospital. The Bursar, Major O.T.T. Panic, regrets that there will be no refund of fees already paid in advance by parents. Exam candidates will not sit the papers, but will be awarded their predicted grades (A*s for all pupils, as predicted by the Headmaster yesterday).

Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS


THIS IS TOO EASY, EH, CHUMS - BULLYING THE FAT BOY! HA! HA ! HA!
YAROOO! ! !
BLUB !
KICK ME
BOTTOMING OUT
WE'VE SHOWN GORDON WHO'S IN CHARGE ROUND HERE !
YES - JOANNA LUMLEY !
OOH - ER . . .
SWOON
NO YOU FLIPPING LITTLE TWERP ! I MEAN WE'VE SHOWN WHO'S GOING TO BE BOSS !
BORIS ?
NICK CLEGG !
FUME !
VINCE CABLE ! ?
MRS THATCHER !
BLUE FUNK
HOORAH ! ! !

Lives of the Saints and Martyrs No. 94

St Joanna of Lumley

AND THERE was living in those times a beautiful, high-born lady named Joanna of Lumley. With her radiant smile and angelic voice, she enchanted all who saw her. One day she came across a humble gurkha sitting by the roadside, cutting nettles with his kukri knife to make nettle soup. For he was so poor that this was his only form of sustenance.

The kindly Joanna knelt down beside him and said, "You poor little gurkha. How came you to this sorry pass?"

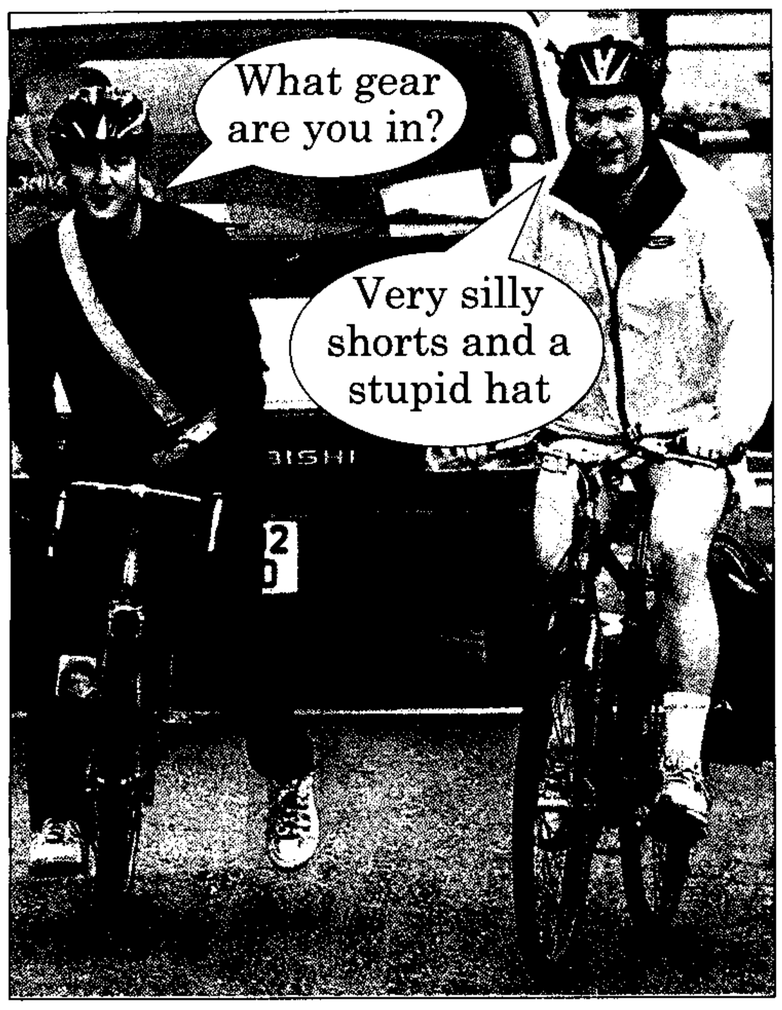
And the gallant little warrior replied in his own language, "After all I have done for Britain, they are sending me back to gurkhaland where I shall surely die, for there are no nettles there for me to make my soup."

Hearing this sorry tale, the saintly Joanna at once determined to lead a great pilgrimage to Westminster, there to upbraid the wicked rulers of the land for their heartless crime.

And when she appeared, the mere sight of her melted the hearts of all who gazed at her, except one, the evil first minister, Gordon Brown.

And the cruel ogre told the poor gurkha, "I give not a fig for your sufferings – you must go back to the land where no nettles grow."

And when the people heard this, they cried out aloud that Gordon was a ruthless tyrant who must resign at once, to be replaced as first minister by the beautiful Saint Joanna.



THE POLITICAL CYCLE

Turning Right Or Staying In The Middle Of The Road?

"Give me a job"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Letters to the Editor

Ayo Gorkhali!

SIR – As one who has served out East, I yield to no one in my admiration of Johnny Gurkha. No finer fighting man exists than this fearless little fellow from the mountains of Gurkhistan who, armed only with his legendary Kukri knife, strikes fear into the heart of any enemy on earth.

I well remember leading a company of these incomparable warriors into the jungles of Shawaddy-waddy, where we were set upon by a whole division of Kamikazi Japanese tanks. At the end of the day, the casualty figures told their own story. Jap tanks 4,302. Gurkhas, nil.

I therefore hesitate to take issue with such a distinguished champion of the little fellows as Mrs Joanna Lumbago, who won all our hearts by her performance in the New Avengers (which, if I may digress for a minute, were nothing like as good as the original Avengers, starring the incomparable Diana Rigg). but it is a grievous mistake, in my view, to think that Johnny Gurkha could be happily transplanted to the countryside of the Home Counties, which to him would be an alien and hostile environment compared with the sunlit snow-capped peaks of Mount Everest, where he can hunt for his beloved yeti meat and die happily of frostbite in the land where the sun never sets (or is it 'never comes out'? – I've never been absolutely sure on this point!).

To sum up,

Yours faithfully

Sir Herbert Gusset
(Maj-Gen. Retd)
C/o Saloon bar, The Slug and Gherkin, Dunkillin, Wilts.

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

KATE WINSLET

Did spoons play a major role in your childhood?

No, we could never afford spoons. We only had one, which all of us kids had to share. We were allowed to lick it, as a special treat, on Christmas Day after Dad had dipped it into a cup of tea without milk or sugar – or tea.

I'm sorry, isn't that straight out of Monty Python's Four Yorkshiremen sketch?

Nay, lad. We were too poor to afford Monty Python sketches. We used to dream of watching Monty Python sketches. There were 27 of us in t'corner of room watching a cardboard box *pretending* it were Monty Python.

Could I just return to the subject of spoons? Do you have many spoons now?

Well, yes, I do, obviously. I've been jolly lucky to make enough money to buy, you know, a few spoons, and I'm not embarrassed about it, but it wasn't always like that. We weren't middle-class, you know. We were a working-class family and I was perfectly happy with an imaginary spoon. You see, we were proud, lad, even though we were poor.

I'm terribly sorry, Ms Winslet, but you seem to have gone back into the Monty Python sketch...

You try telling that to the young people of today and they won't believe you. They won't.

Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with spoons?

No. We were working-class. We couldn't afford a sense of humour. Thank you! Ciao! Gotta dash! Bless! Gather! Whoops!

"Seriously, Sneezy, you should call Max Clifford"

A Foreign Doctor Writes

MANY elderly patients have been presenting at my after-hours surgery, worried about the possibility of dying from contracting swine flu.

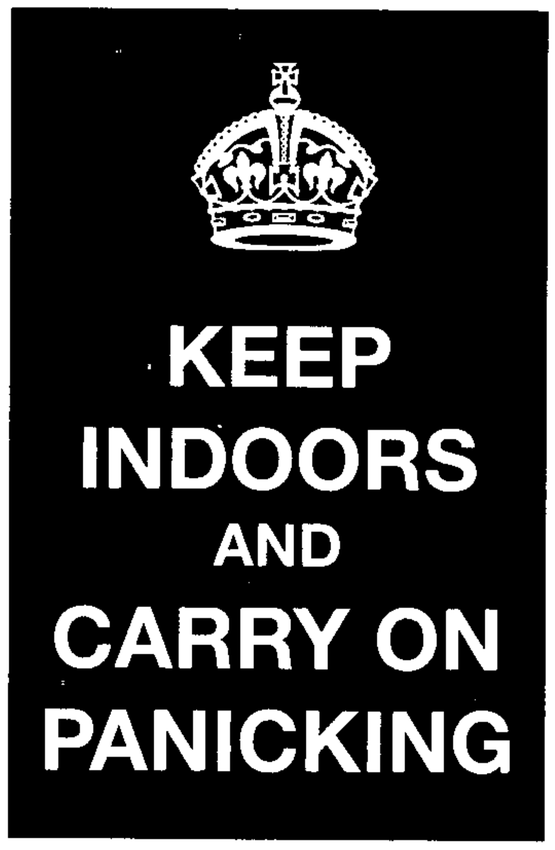
I reassure them that there is very little chance of that. As I flew into the country only a few hours ago and am exhausted from lack of sleep, they will in fact die when I inject them with one hundred times the recommended dose of whatever it is I am meant to give them.

I hope that puts their minds (and everything else) to rest.

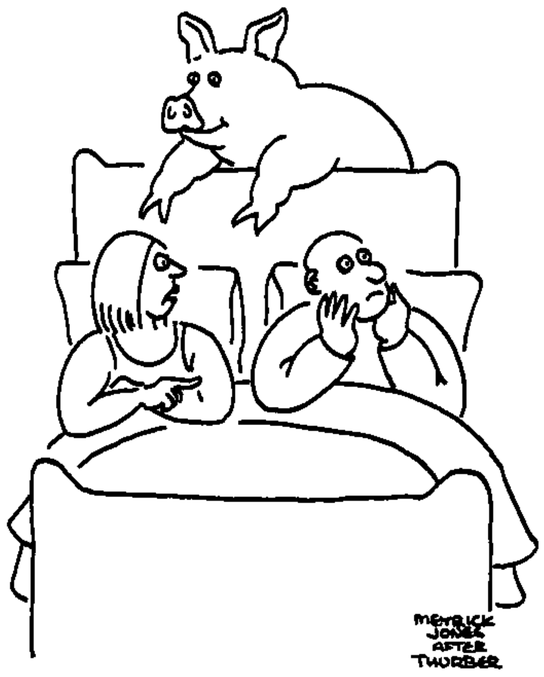
© A. Foreign Doctor 2009

Anyone exhibiting symptoms is being referred to an isolation room where they can be evaluated by a public health official before proceeding to their destruction.

Flu Advice
Homeland Security (U.S. website)



THE 2009 VERSION OF THE POSTER THAT EVERYONE WANTS!



"Alright, have it your way... you heard a pig sneeze!"

Exclusive to the Daily Mail

WILL SWINE FLU CAUSE NEW HOUSE PRICE CRASH?

HEALTH experts last night warned that a dramatic house price crash might be imminent in Britain in the wake of the global Swine Flu pandemic, as whole cities had to be abandoned by the authorities in the vain hope of containing the plague as the bodies of the millions of dead were left to rot in the streets, causing property prices in already depressed parts of the country to sink to new record lows and *(cont. p. 94)*

That latest World Health Organisation guidance in full

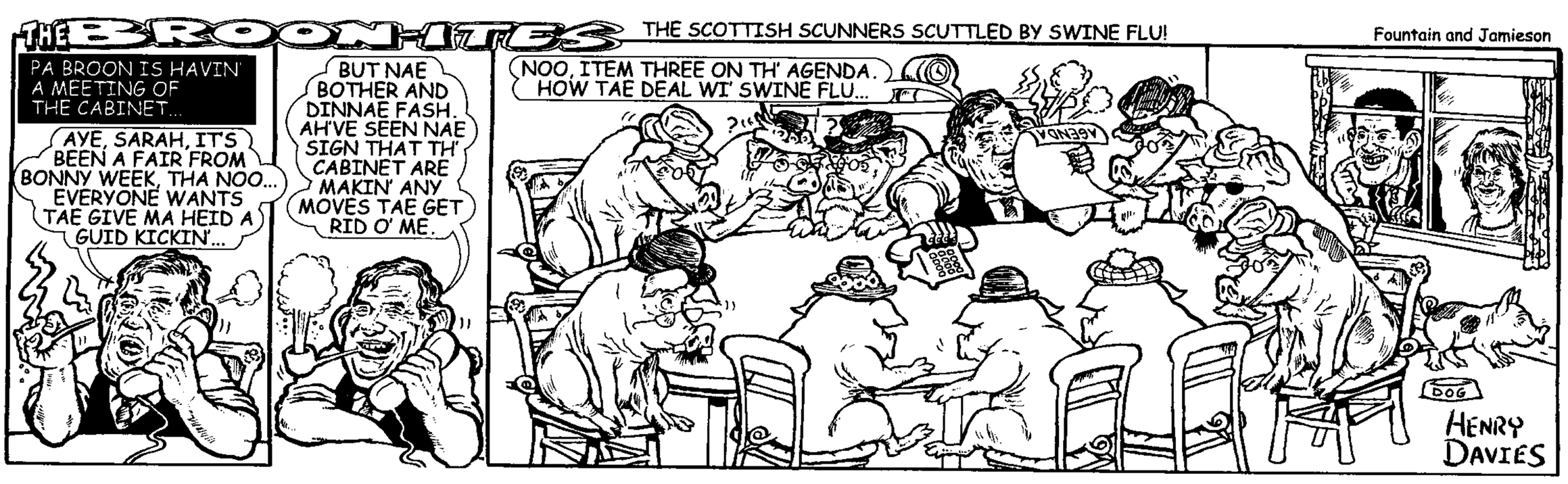
- **Unlikely to become a global pandemic**
  Bird flu
- **Possibility of becoming a global pandemic**
  Swine flu
- **Certain to become a global pandemic**
  YouTube clip of Susan Boyle singing on 'Britain's Got Talent'

SWINE FLU 'SECOND WAVE' WARNING

HEALTH experts have urged newspaper readers to continue to be vigilant, warning that an even deadlier second wave of swine flu scare stories could be on the way.

"The first wave of scare stories only appeared to have a limited effect on circulation, but it's impossible to predict how the editors will react," said one wild-eyed professor with silly hair.

"Once your newspaper has contracted a virulent strain of swine flu scare stories, they can very quickly mutate and spread *(cont. p. 94)*


THE BROON-ITES
THE SCOTTISH SCUNNERS SCUTTLED BY SWINE FLU!
Fountain and Jamieson
PA BROON IS HAVIN' A MEETING OF THE CABINET...
AYE, SARAH, IT'S BEEN A FAIR FROM BONNY WEEK, THA NOO... EVERYONE WANTS TAE GIVE MA HEID A GUID KICKIN'...
BUT NAE BOTHER AND DINNAE FASH. AH'VE SEEN NAE SIGN THAT TH' CABINET ARE MAKIN' ANY MOVES TAE GET RID O' ME.
NOO, ITEM THREE ON TH' AGENDA. HOW TAE DEAL WI' SWINE FLU...
AGENDA
DOG
HENRY DAVIES

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Appointment Of Ms Carol Ann Duffy As The First Woman Poet Laureate

So. Congratulations
Carol Ann Duffy,
Best known for
Your poem about
An onion.

Yes, your new job
Is like
An onion.

It makes you cry
And then you get
Chopped to pieces
And put with
Sausages.

(This last part of my
Metaphor doesn't
Really work. But
I am trying to be
Truthful
As you yourself said.
Even though I am
Not on the GCSE
Syllabus like
You are.)

I could go on
But the editor
Has told me I must
Stop or he will
Give me
The sack.

Which is what
You get for being
Poet Laureate.

Keith doesn't get
This joke because
He does not know that
Sack is the old
Word for
Sherry.

Which is what
The Poet
Laureate is given
As a reward, to go with
Her sausages and
Onions.

Eric Jarvis Thribb (17½)

This is a good review of an important era, marred slightly by the occasional pisspellings such as 'intercepter' and 'propellor'.

Book review, Aircraft Illustrated

Book review, Aircraft Illustrated

SWINE FLU
Your Questions Answered

Q **How do I know if I've got it?**

A You will experience flu-like symptoms, such as a runny nose or a cough. You may even have a sore throat.

Q **Is that all?**

A In the early stages, yes. But as the disease takes hold, you may experience more severe symptoms, such as death.

Q **What should I do if I catch it?**

A If you think you have caught swine flu, it is most important that you should avoid any further contact with human beings. Do not leave your home, do not cough or sneeze and, above all, do not visit your doctor. He or she has a very important job to do in looking after the victims of swine flu and it is therefore vital that he or she remains healthy.

Q **What exactly is swine flu?**

A Swine flu, or HGVINIOU to give it its proper medical name, is a variation of the common flu virus DVD5H6 which, though currently treatable, could well cross with avian and human strains of flu to form a more virulent strain, PGT1PS, which could well wipe out the entire human race within a week.

Q **Should I panic?**

A At present there is no need to panic. But should the present very alarming situation continue, panic may well be the most appropriate response.

Q **Can I still eat sausages?**

A At present there appears to be no serious risk in consuming pork products, so long as certain basic hygiene precautions are followed – e.g. hands must be washed three times with an approved biological hand-cleaner containing polyurethanedioxyribonucleicflaminate B.The towel you use to dry your hands must then be burned. The sausage must have been kept in a sterile environment for a minimum of 6 days before cooking. Similar precautions should be taken with the following foodstuffs: BLT Sarnie, Melton Mowbray Pie, Ham Roll, Pork Scratchings, Peregrine Worsthorne.

Q **Is it essential to wear a face mask at all times?**

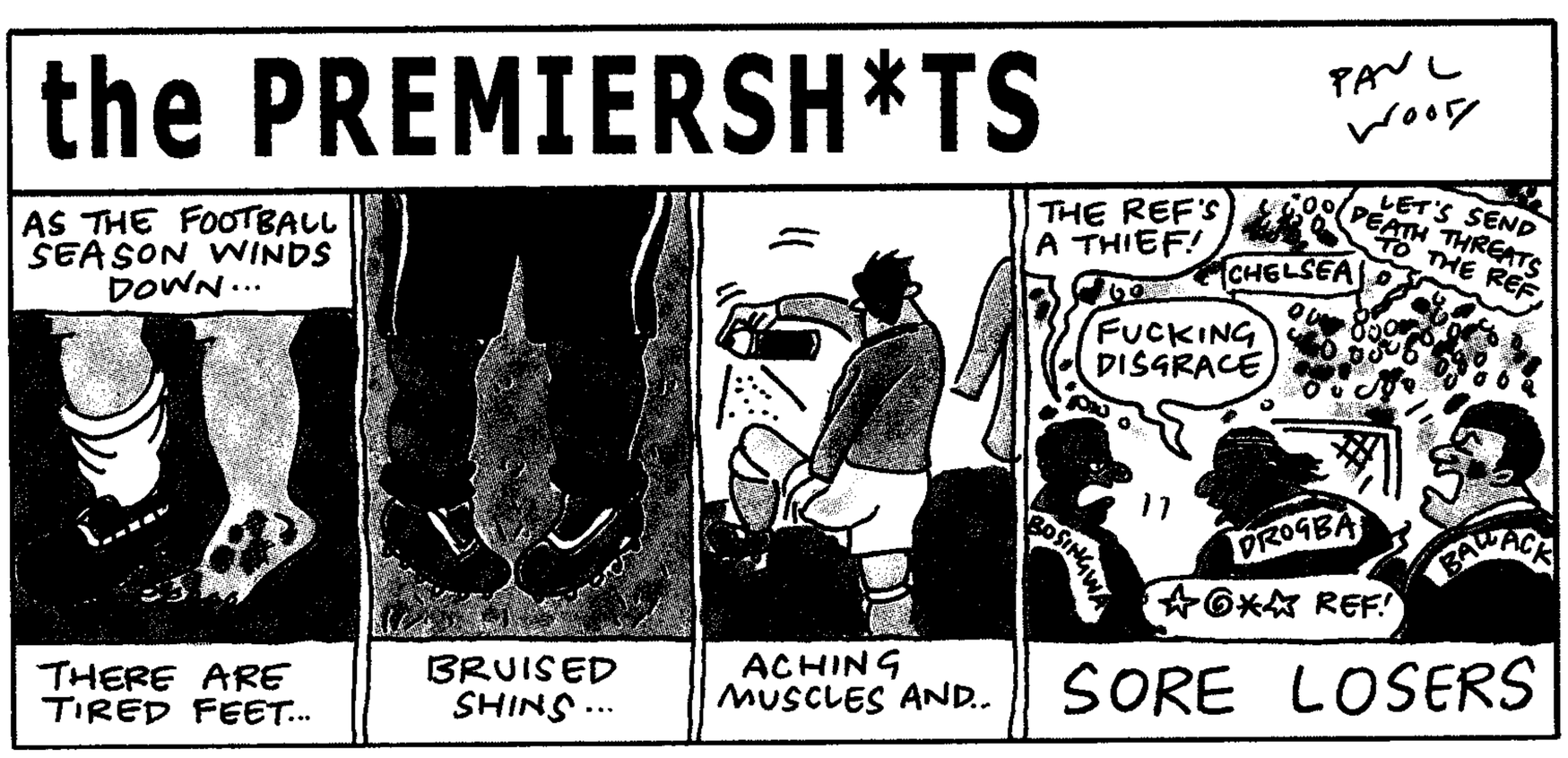
A Yes, except when eating a sausage (see above).

Q **Does Tamiflu work?**

A Yes and no. In some cases it does, in other cases it doesn't. But the government has stockpiled over 2,000 billion doses, more than enough to kill the whole world. *(Is this right? Ed.)*

Q **What is the correct response to someone sneezing?**

A You should immediately reply with the traditional German expression 'Schweinflu!' (Bless you!)



POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam *The South Bank Show*: LWT's Flagship Arts Programme 1978-2010

So. Farewell
Then *The South*
Bank Show and its
Famous compere
Lord Bragg of
Wigton.

You will be remembered
For such highlights
In the culture of
Our time as
George Michael smoking
Pot and
Francis Bacon
Getting drunk.

But most of all you
Will be missed for
Your immortal
"Catch tune"
by Julian Lord-Webber.

All together now.
Dum-diddy-diddy-diddy
Dum-dum-dum
Etc.

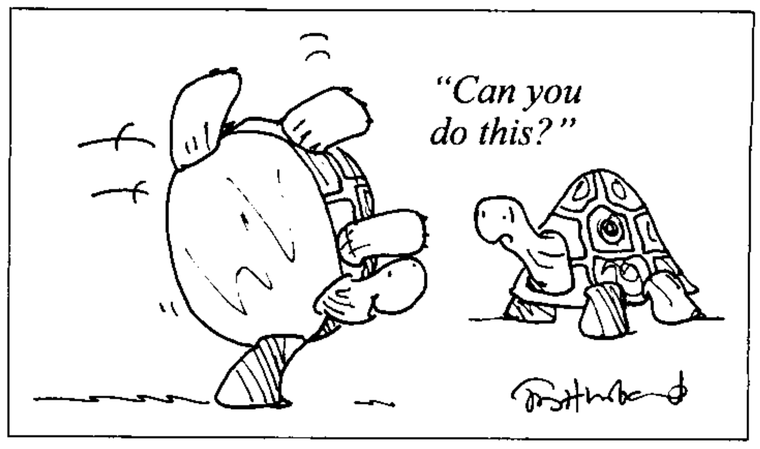
E.J. Thribb (17½)

Highlights From The Greatest Arts Show Of All Time

Composer Brahms told Melvyn: "It was worth writing all those symphonies just to get on your show."

Picasso told the Cumbrian colossus: "Mllord, we have so much in common, you and I – wine, women and money!"

The Bard of Avon told the Bard of Wigton: "TV or not TV – that is the question, eh, Melve baby?"



From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

Government go-ahead for ID cards

Stupid ID-ea! lol! People change their appearance overnight – Gary Glitter looks like Rolf Harris and the computer picture of Madeleine McCann is nothing like her. Then again Gordon Brown still looks like a lemon! – ***Danny_Daz***

i like the new maddie picture but the iconic 1 was better? – ***Hayley_321***

if the new picture help's rase Maddies self steam then its worth it – ***Caring_Karen***

its sick that the vile pervert gary glitter can look at the computer picture of maddie and think thing's that a normal person can only imagine ● – ***Eye_4_an_eye***

agree 1000 persent Eye4 it make's me ill 2 think the vile pervert can read the same pap-er an look at the same tv programs as me an my famly ●● – ***Broken_Britan***

footballer's jump-ing on the band dragon wear-ing maddie tea shirt's an then they just take them off an play the game as if nothin has hapend ● i dont get a hundred grand a week but i wear the tea shirt evry day – ***Tru_Maddie_support-er***

not bein funy but i never seen gerry an kate mcan on the maddy threds an i wonder if there realy interested? more "LIKE" a hobbie 2 them probly? – ***Hunny_pot***

with all due respect to myself, I do'nt claim to be in the same liege as some of the poster's on this thread 😳 but I post 3 or 4 times a week and the least the McCann's can do is to match that. – ***Student_Clone***

kate mcan = tippycle celebrity ● she don nothing 4 her fame an stil aint got a clu on lookin after kid's ● now she sez whu-ever has maddie shuld hand her over 2 a priest 😕 y not jus giv her strate to gary gliter ● – ***Justice_4_Maddie***

As a father I keep asking why Maddie and not one of my kids? It makes me feel guilty but I have to admit that I am glad they are alive. – ***Tim_the_househusband***

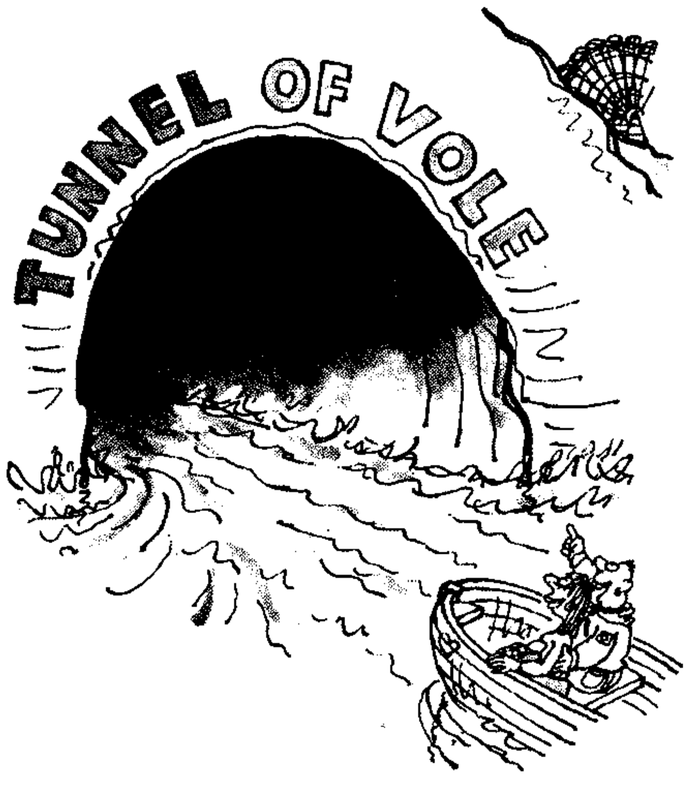
Your feelings are completely natural Tim. I am blessed with four lovely children – Holly and Jessica who are six, Madeleine who is nearly two, and new arrival baby Peter. Every day I thank God that they are safe. – ***Hattie***

MAN GIVEN NEW FACE

Amazing Medical Breakthrough

GAUGUIN KILLED KENNEDY SHOCK

A NEW BOOK by Rita Nütkaz and Hans Bønkers reveals that the French artist was actually the mystery man in the Dallas Book Depository in November 1963. *(Rotters)*



DIARY

PETER HITCHENS: THE INDEX

Aardvark: deliberately offensive animal genetically engineered by leftist medics 12-14

Andrews Sisters: high point of Western Culture, The 192-193

Ankles, Women's: high time they were covered up, or we all face a government-sponsored plague of venereal disease 27, 56

Angkor Wat: British monument pilfered by foreigners 78

Apples: Stalinist doctors determined to force-feed us an apple a day against our will 70-73

Arsenic, more poisonous than: *See* Blair, Cherie

Babies: gullibility of 54
inability to stand on own two feet 59
politically illiterate 55
whiners and whingers 56-7

Bananas: bent 93
bruised 94
yellow 95

Biscuit: unsavoury 12
'u' in word "biscuit" kept silent by our political classes 13

Blair, Anthony: and probable involvement in "unsolved" Jack the Ripper murders 203-7

Blair, Cherie: denies being fully paid-up Colonel in the KGB 202

Bosoms: far too many 121
Trotskyite plot to expose Jordan's 122
wholly gratuitous to mention them in this context 123-9

Brains, Fried with cannabis: *See* Young People Today

Broth: too many cooks improve the 51-2

Cameron, David MP:
banana, spotted secretly eating a 106
Blair, Anthony: possible homosexual liaison with 123
elitist pronunciation of "biscuit" 13
praise for mass-murderer Mandela 17
repeated refusal to admit involvement in burning of Reichstag building 190-92
tell-tale Leninist hair-do 14

Cheese: Exactly the same as chalk, despite what they may have us believe 91

Communist spies, probable: *See* Dench, Dame Judi; Edinburgh, Duke of; Potter, Harry; Tebbit, Norman;

Daleks: and New Labour 35-8
role in determining EC policy 38-41
secret 35-year alliance with Dr Who
See Who, Dr

Darling, Alistair MP: beard suggests possible transsexual 183-34

Echoes: not the natural phenomenon we are always being told 146
supplied by MI5 under direct instructions from Moscow 147

Eggs: Omelettes best made without breaking 29

Elm Disease, Dutch: Brought into this country in early Seventies by "pop" group The Rolling Stones with full knowledge of Buckingham Palace 177

Facts: simply not true 77-84

Farrakhan, Louis: welcomed as Treasurer of Henley Conservative Party 93

Fishfingers: contain cannabis 14, 46

Forsyth, Bruce: self-proclaimed homosexuals permitted on Strictly Come Dancing 134-7

G-Spot: government invention 67
ruse to distract us from Iraq war 68

Gander, Goosey-Goosey: homeless vagrant and sexual pervert 103

Gymnasium: paedophiles trained in government-funded: 119, 157

Hands: urgent need for gloves on women's 41

Homosexuality: soon to be practised between men and women 145-47

KGB: Tommy Cooper full Colonel in 199

Kindergartens *(origin: German)*: hotbeds of thought-control 98

Laxatives: forced on author by person or persons unknown shortly before major speech 222

Pan, Everything going down the: 1-229, 231-258.

Persons Unknown: David Cameron, Alastair Campbell and Cherie Blair 222

Quill Pens: banned for sale by extremist left-wing sectarians in WHSmith 112

Rugby Football: hot-bed of homo-sexuality 43-4

Run Rabbit, Run Rabbit, Run, Run, Run: or you will be preyed upon by left-wing Islamic pederasts 25, 34, 57-8, 92, 97, 109, 167-8

Scum of the Earth: *See* Wimbledon, Wombles of, The 223

Sexual intercourse: permitted by successive leftist governments 116
endorsed by Cherie Blair 117
seen on TV, Disgrace that it is 118-25 throughout the day and night, if you look hard enough 125-33

Sweet, Life is: no it jolly well isn't, at least not in my house 98-101

Tomatoes, Yes We Have No: typical example of illogical Stalinist economics as practised by Brown 59-60

Tortoises: even they are having it away with one another, with no one bothering to stop them 133-4

Turtles too: 135

Up Up and Away In My Beautiful Balloon: *See* subversive long-haired songs that promote drug abuse 171

Vaizey, Ed: former member of The Village People 29

VD: kissing leads to 139

Winter: season before Autumn and after Spring 221-5

Young People Today:
brains addled through excess of depraved sex 112
elders, No respect for their 113
high on drugs 114
incapable of rational thought 115

XXX: *See* VD

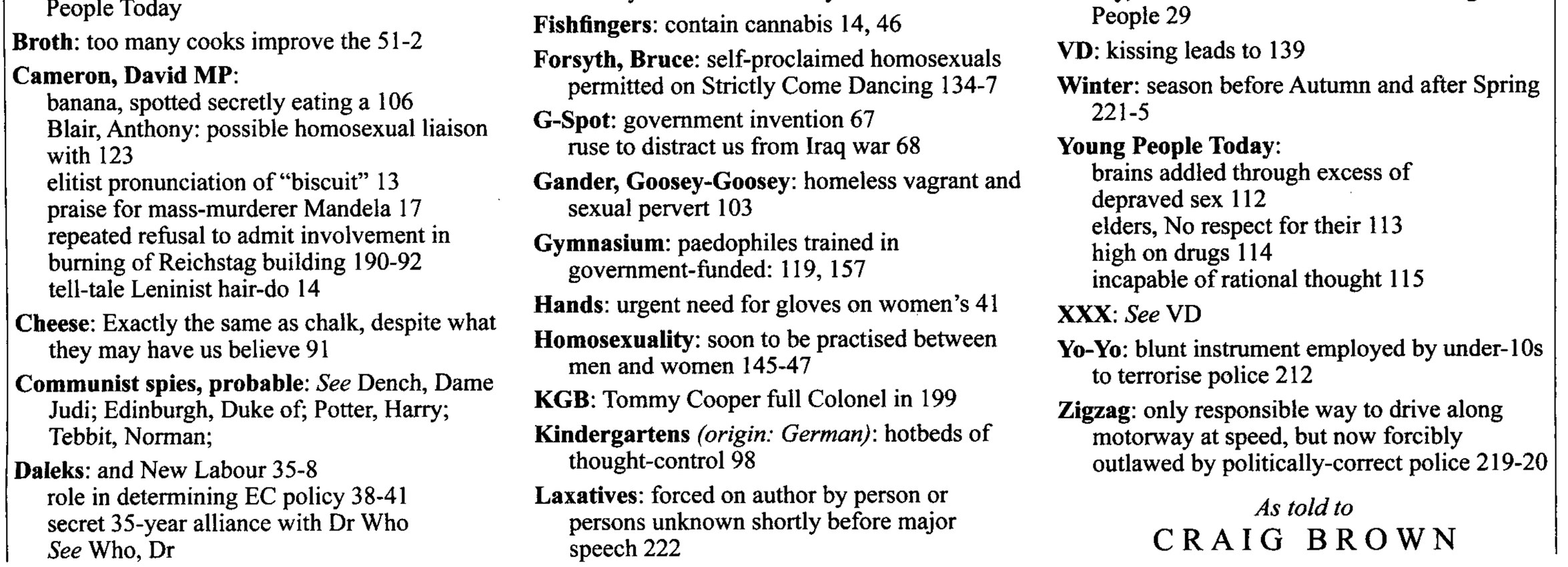
Yo-Yo: blunt instrument employed by under-10s to terrorise police 212

Zigzag: only responsible way to drive along motorway at speed, but now forcibly outlawed by politically-correct police 219-20

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER


GARY AND I ARE THINKING ABOUT RENEWING OUR WEDDING VOWS...
AH!
IN THE LITTLE CHURCH WHERE WE FIRST TIED THE KNOT... JUST FOR FAMILY AND CLOSE FRIENDS...
HOW ROMANTIC!
WE DON'T WANT IT TO BE A BIG DEAL...
NO...
JUST A COUPLE OF HUNDRED GRAND FOR THE PHOTO EXCLUSIVE?
I'LL ASK MY EDITOR

Literary Review

Webbed feat

The Wikipedia Revolution
Andrew Lih
(Aurum, £14.99)

What Would Google Do?
Jeff Jarvis
(Collins Business, £14.99)

BOOKS announcing the death of the book have developed into a robustly healthy genre of the book-publishing industry, last year's *Print Is Dead* by Jeff Gomez (Macmillan) being a notably premature example. Why are such books being published at all? Either their thesis is right, in which case you'd think the publishing industry would want to suppress the fact; or, as seems probable, they are wrong, in which case the fact that a publisher had paid an advance for a load of rubbish would be, well, a reassuring sign of business as usual.

Jeff Jarvis concedes the point in *What Would Google Do?*, frankly admitting that the only reason he repackaged what began as a series of blogs in book form was the prospect of earning a healthy advance. "I'm a hypocrite," he admits; but, he adds: "I'm no fool; I couldn't pass up a nice check from my publisher." The message of his book is that Google is wonderful and every business must either do as Google does or perish. It's a frightening prospect.

What most people know about Google is that it knows what you want to know before you know you want to know it, and will retain that information long after you've forgotten you ever wanted to know it. It also knows everything else about you, including which websites you visited when you thought no one was looking or were too drunk to remember having searched for them. It knows about where you live and has an aerial photograph of your house and a streetview picture of your open bedroom window.

Google also owns YouTube, currently the vehicle of choice for prime ministerial expressions of hopeless aspiration, and Blogger, where doctors of spin perform online smear tests. But how does Google make it all pay? The answer is Google's AdSense program, which customises the ads it displays according to what it perceives (entirely mechanically) to be the subject matter of the page on which they appear. Anyone who has a G-mail account will be aware of the risible "spamverts" this produces. And yet it generates a massive proportion of the company's $20bn annual revenue.

Jarvis's book is a business manual, not a jeremiad about Google's tentacular dominance of online traffic, or its sinister Big Brother potential. He blandly accepts that if Google says "don't be evil" then it must be "trying to be good".

He claims Google provides a business model that almost any company can follow. Its chief virtues are that it gives customers what they want by allowing them to collaborate and thereby learning better what they want and how best to provide it. He starts with the proposition that "Google is our model for thinking in new ways because it is so singularly successful", and then asserts that almost any business not only can transform itself along the same lines, but that, in the internet age, it must.

This is all very well if your business is in media or marketing. Nearly all newspapers now accept that they must put their content online for free, and hope to pay their staff from those tiresome ads. Book publishers may eventually have to follow suit, though the prospect of reading e-books festooned with spamverts is certainly offputting. And there are lots of "middleman" services, such as estate agents and financial advisers, who can operate just as well if not better online.

But the thesis falls flat when it comes to businesses that deal with what he calls "atoms" or "stuff": manufacturing and retail. However much connecting with blogworthy folk and sharing information in communities you do, you still have to deal with the physical reality of making, storing and delivering a product. You can't provide cars or furniture for free. Once you're off the net, what Jarvis calls "Googlethink" doesn't apply. As he says: "There's nothing Googley about toilet paper." Or is there? Jarvis has a second thought: how about "getting toilet paper printed with Wikipedia's knowledge"?

Appropriate as it may seem, this is not an idea that Andrew Lih discusses in his largely hagiographic account subtitled "How a bunch of nobodies created the world's greatest encyclopedia". In other respects, though, Wikipedia is quite Googley, because it depends so heavily on "crowdsourcing" and collaboration by users. This is both its strength and its weakness.

The fact that an entire online publication (the equivalent of hundreds of printed volumes) has been created by volunteers seems in business terms too good to be true. All that free labour! The problem is, that's also how it reads. In other words, each article is only as good as the unpaid enthusiasts who have either contributed or edited it, and in some cases as bad as the mischief-makers (described variously as "trolls", "vandals" and "sock-puppets") who have deliberately distorted and perverted it.

Given that almost no one writes articles under their real name, questions of provenance and authority must inevitably arise. While Wikipedia remains the source of choice for lazy journalists and academic plagiarists, no one else would dream of taking it without a healthy dose of salt. And though it has been cited in evidence in some American and European courts, in a recent case an appeal court actually reversed the decision of a judge for wrongly allowing one of the parties to rely on a Wikipedia entry to bolster its case, saying it was an "inherently unreliable" source of information.

Lih acknowledges the problems and briefly sketches over some of the more egregious scandals. And while claiming it to be a "highly regarded online reference" (I think he means "widely"), he concedes that Wikipedia is only accurate "more often than not", a standard that can be satisfied as little as 51 percent of the time. No commercial publisher could get away with that.

It used to be said that an infinite number of monkeys using an infinite number of typewriters would eventually come up with the entire works of Shakespeare (or similar). What Wikipedia seems to demonstrate is that an infinite number of nerds at their computers will eventually record all human knowledge in one database (assuming Google hasn't got there first).

And when that happens, the geek shall truly have inherited the earth.

"Let me assure you ladies, that the end of April and the beginning of May can be extremely wuthering"

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

The Children's Book
A.S. Byatt
(Chatto £16.99)

AS THE train bored on through soft, Kentish night, Elfrida Snitkin devised a story for her children. It was about a little tribe of trolls, fierce and black, perhaps an inch or two high, or sometimes three, who emerged from the wainscoting of the nursery in the silence of the night and wove the discarded strands of tobacco from their father Inverarity Snitkin's pipe into gold yarn. Some of the trolls were invisible, others not. Some were well-intentioned, a few fit only to menace. The gold was taken away and sold to an enterprising dragon, Ancaligon, who resided in the well.

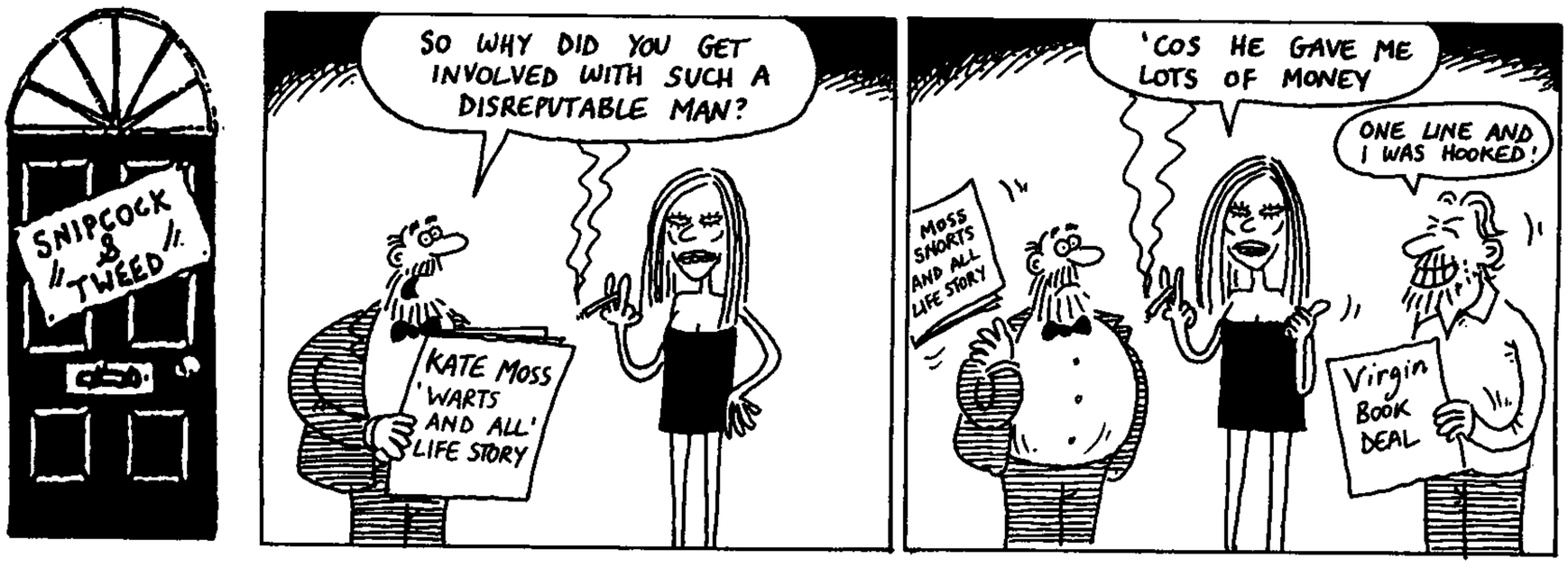
The children listened thoughtfully with pale, stricken faces. Ptolemy, troubled and serious, wondered if the trolls were interested in bi-metallism, of which his father sometimes spoke. Hecuba felt freedom in this beautiful and terrible imagined world. Araminta thought of the trolls' sharp, clever fingers tugging at the hem of her poplin dress. Philip, the boy they had discovered in the basement of the South Kensington museum and brought home with them, sat mute and quiescent in the darkling shade.

"Where be you a-taking me, mum?" he demanded finally.

"Where are we taking you?" Mrs Snitkin, like many English things, and many English novels, appeared at first to be an instance of pure whimsy, but was in fact more complicated. "Why, it is the happiest chance. Really it is. Why, Philip, we are taking you away to be a character in Mrs Byatt's wonderful new historical panorama."

He thought of hard, adamantine rock, caverns far underground, white, nacreous jewels in clustered profusion. "But what do that mean, mum?"

"It is the greatest opportunity. Why, you will be taken to my house and introduced to a number of persons even more implausibly named than those you have already


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
SO WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SUCH A DISREPUTABLE MAN?
KATE MOSS 'WARTS AND ALL' LIFE STORY
'COS HE GAVE ME LOTS OF MONEY
ONE LINE AND I WAS HOOKED!
MOSS SHORTS AND ALL LIFE STORY
Virgin Book DEAL

met: Gentian, for example, and Mauve, and possibly even Floribunda, if she has come back from her eurhythmy class. You will be compelled to watch a great many puppet shows derived from the fascinating books of German fairy tales with which Mrs Byatt has filled her house over the past few years, and learn about the history of early Fabianism which she has been researching in the London Library. You will have to listen to a torrent of immensely stylised conversation of a kind that no human being ever spoke, where quite ordinary words are arbitrarily italicised – there! What did I tell you? Like that – as in the novels of Iris Murdoch, of which Mrs Byatt is such a devotee. And, of course, you will be acclaimed by the critics. What better future could there be for a slum-lad from Burslem with no seat to his trousers?'

The train was slowing to a halt, amid overhanging woods of beech, and birch and yew. "Please mum," he begged. "I wants to get out."

"That, alas, I cannot allow." Elfrida's face shone arrestingly through the murk. "We are in a novel by A.S. Byatt, you see, and there are another 600 pages to go."

POETS CORNER

■ SUSPICION of poets' ability to communicate seems the slightly surprising message of BBC TV's poetry season, which gets fully under way next week.

In the trailers, the likes of Frank Skinner and Lauren Laverne evangelise for verse by reciting favourite poems; and the same principle is evident in the season's documentaries, presented by over-familiar telly faces (er, surely not? Ed.) Poets do appear, but with one exception only as interviewees, presumably deemed too weird and liable to scare off even BBC2 and BBC4 viewers if on screen for more than three minutes.

The exception is Simon Armitage, who contributes to two programmes but is also allowed to promote his version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as presenter. In planning this celebration of verse timed to follow the new laureate's appointment, the Beeb appears to have gambled haplessly on the Yorkshireman (who incidentally would have been the third consecutive Faber bloke) emerging as winner. Ex-laureate Andrew Motion naturally pops up, too, and we get glimpses of Roger McGough and Wendy Cope, both talked of as contenders in the race's early stages; but there's a bit of a hole in the season where the actual new laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, really ought to be.

■ *AFTER years of Motion turning up regularly on the Today programme to publicise National Poetry Day, read topical poems or discuss literary issues, Radio 4 may also find itself a laureate-free zone.*

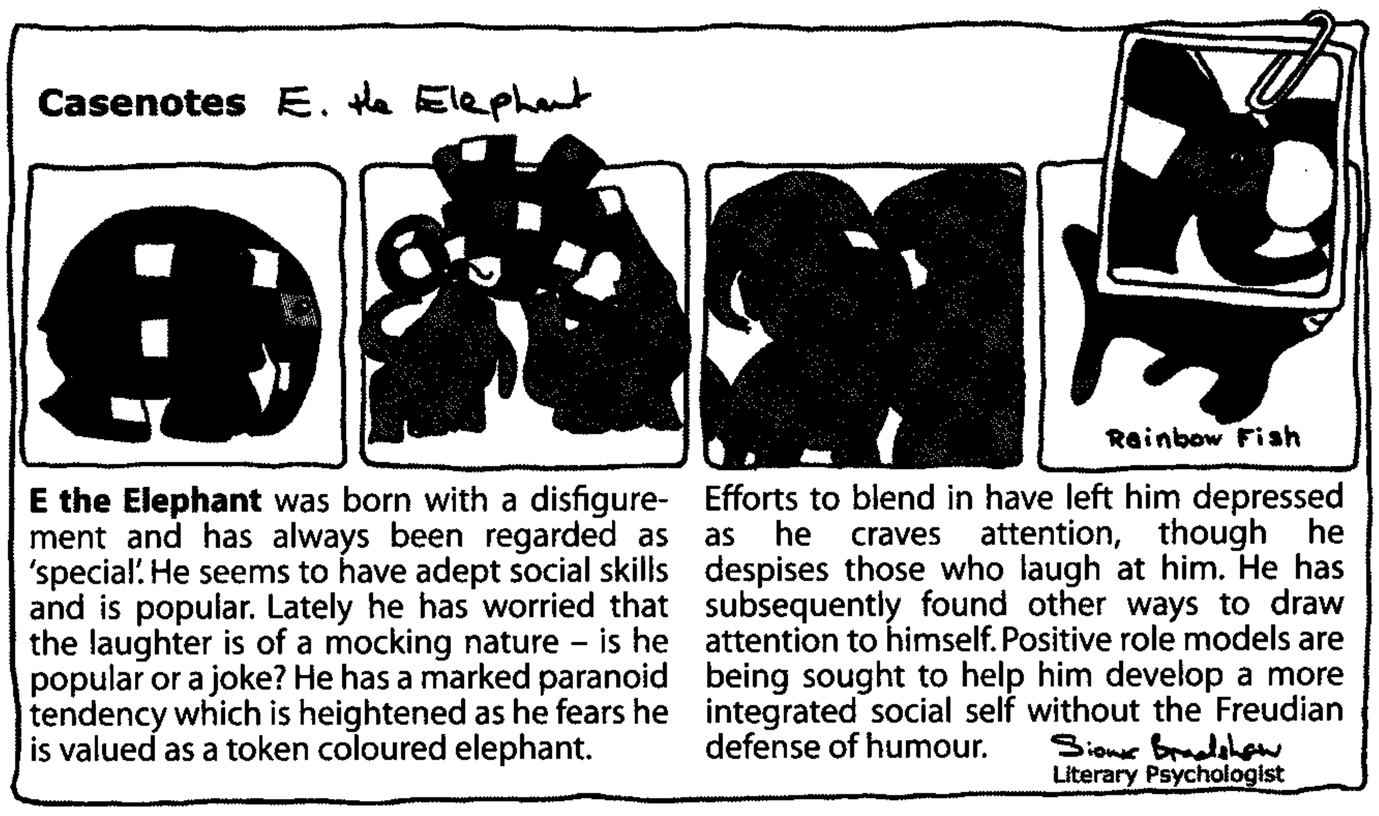
A frosty relationship with Duffy dates back to her TS Eliot Prize win three years ago, which was followed by a disastrous interview on Front Row: disastrous because she had er... over celebrated her victory according to the radio folk, although a sympathetic recent profile suggested she took offence at one of the male interviewer's questions and walked out.

Whatever the truth, achieving a rapprochement will be tricky. Even before this fiasco Duffy rarely agreed to interviews by men, and she is picky about which women question her (poets or poetry lovers rather than revelation-hunting generalists). So it's unlikely even Sarah Montague, let alone John Humphrys, would meet with her approval. But the Today programme is not given to allowing guests to choose their interviewer.

■ WHEREAS the contest to become poet laureate was clean though important, the battle for the parochial and relatively insignificant post of Oxford Professor of Poetry (with graduates voting next weekend) has curiously been considerably dirtier.

The ex-lover whom Ruth Padel celebrated in verse, mentioned here but not named, has in effect outed himself since as the *Independent*'s columnist John Walsh; and in giving "my old friend" his backing, he aired in the mainstream press for the first time allegations about sexual harassment in the past by her rival Derek Walcott, which Padel supporters have been circulating in a dossier.

A piquant plea, then: a call to vote for Padel on the grounds of sexual ethics, made by the man with whom she had a quasi-adulterous affair (she was single, he was living with his long-standing partner and their children).


Casenotes E. the Elephant
Rainbow Fish
E the Elephant was born with a disfigurement and has always been regarded as 'special'. He seems to have adept social skills and is popular. Lately he has worried that the laughter is of a mocking nature – is he popular or a joke? He has a marked paranoid tendency which is heightened as he fears he is valued as a token coloured elephant.
Efforts to blend in have left him depressed as he craves attention, though he despises those who laugh at him. He has subsequently found other ways to draw attention to himself. Positive role models are being sought to help him develop a more integrated social self without the Freudian defense of humour.
Literary Psychologist

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ WHILE dozens of MPs bought new televisions with our money – including a claim for a £3,100 model for one MP and an £850 set for Hazel Blears, which must be bigger than she is – according to the *Telegraph*'s revelations so far only one has purchased a book in order "to enable them to work effectively in parliament and in their constituencies".

It was Shaun Woodward, the Northern Ireland minister, whose reading habits, as we reveal elsewhere, are exemplary. The tome in question? A second-hand copy of *Ben: The Story of Ben Hardwick* by Esther Rantzen and, er, Shaun Woodward.

■ GREAT strides forward with Labour's manifesto commitment to boost child literacy, as the government prepares to introduce new legislation that could drive children's authors out of libraries, classrooms and even book festivals for good.

As of November 2010 it will be a legal requirement for authors to apply to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (set up as one of the recommendations of the Bichard Report into the Soham murders) for clearance if they are "invited to speak at any public event where you may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults more than once a year". The checks cost a minimum of £64, and anyone who "allows a person who is not yet registered with the ISA to work for any length of time in any regulated activity" will be committing a criminal offence.

The Society of Authors has pledged it will be "making representations to the ISA about the disproportionately wide-reaching implications of the current proposals". Meanwhile a former children's laureate told the *Eye*: "This could put an end to pretty well all festivals, launches, school and library visits, bookshop signings, lectures – I certainly am not going to apply for a check of this sort in order to stand on a dais in front of 250 children with ten or so members of staff in attendance, to ensure I do not rape any of them."

'Bookworm'

HIGH PRINCIPALS

POOR Doncaster College has terrible luck with principals. The latest, Rowland Foote, is now suspended after an investigation into mismanagement was ordered by governors.

Foote took up the poisoned chalice in December 2007, arriving from Bournemouth to be the college's third principal in four years. He was once a chef on the *QE2* and spoke openly of his approval of a world run by chefs, earning himself the moniker "Chef" in the process.

Six months ago Foote announced phase 1 of his radical solution to the college's problems: Chef needed more cooks – an additional clutch of highly paid management, with new vice-principals, directors and senior officers to give him the time for some blue-sky thinking about the way forward (*Eye* 1209).

Restructure phase 2 was announced in March. Managed by Eversheds at a cost of nearly £500,000, it involved 160 redundancies. More than 300 staff were told they were "at risk". A new deficit was airily described as "between £1.7m and £4m".

Audit committee minutes from last December show the accounts were in a mess. A report by accountants Tenon said financial and accounting control had been inadequate and that the large number of adjustments made during the audit process was "unusual" and "highlighted deficiencies in the management, accounting and financial reporting processes". Nevertheless, finance director Tony Myers survived until 30 April, when he was suspended. He had been preceded by Foote, who was suspended on 28 April when he returned after a lengthy spell off sick. The whole restructure was abandoned on the 29th.

But hang on a minute, how did things get so bad? Thanks to Doncaster's previous failings, the Learning and Skills Council has two observers attending all governors' meetings who must have sat on their hands as approval of Foote's disastrous "restructure" project passed through a series of meetings.

EDUCASHUN NEWS

NEWS that the bonus culture had seeped into headteachers' pay had the government predictably baffled after a teacher blew the whistle on the bonuses being paid to senior staff at a school in Wembley, north-west London.

Copland School head Alan Davies was paid £130,000 in bonuses over two years, while his deputies also received huge pay hikes. At first, education secretary Ed Balls defended extra pay for successful school leaders, but then the Department for Children, Schools and Families told local media that it believed such payments to be "unlawful".

Meanwhile, in Peterborough another private sector wheeze has been found to pay an over-the-odds salary to a headteacher. A freedom of information request by the city council's Lib Dems revealed that the city is paying a "consultant headteacher" a £111,030 salary. The average salary for a secondary headteacher outside London is £76,600. John Catton was drafted in to take over the struggling Orton Longueville school temporarily in March 2007 when the previous head quit. Two years later he is still there.

The use of expensive "consultant" chief executives, on salaries far above the going rate for hospital bosses, has already cost the NHS a fortune (*Eyes passim*). Is education now following the same path?

Pseuds Corner

This was a drama that was half tempest, half comedy of errors that could easily have transferred across town to the Globe Theatre.

HENRY WINTER on Chelsea vs Liverpool, *Daily Telegraph*

In this episodic collage, en route to London's Spill festival, Fabre and his athletic company are making the connection between masturbation and consumerism. Theirs is a vision of society dedicated to instant gratification, one in which sexual stimulation is on the same orgasmic continuum as the fetishisation of high-end goods. While they're at it, they suggest this me-generation indulgence results in anything from casual racism to out-and-out slavery.

Fabre expresses these ideas with considerable visual flair, whether it's a Blue Danube waltz of Lidl supermarket trolleys or the Olympic wanking competition that opens the show. At its best, Orgy of Tolerance creates surreal yet loaded metaphors, such as the sexual coupling of a luxury leather couch and a designer handbag, and the women who give painful birth to bags of sweets, tins of baked beans and cans of lager.

MARK FISHER, *Guardian*

Those first 45 minutes may just rate among the most consummate performances of the 21st century in any team sport. It was less like watching Brazil than spying on Pablo Picasso at work.

ROBERT KITSON, *Guardian*

This paper argues that the work of Gabriel Tarde on imitation provides a fertile means of understanding how capitalism is forging a new affective technology which confirms to a logic of propensity rather than to means-end reasoning. This it does by drawing together a biological understanding of semiconscious cognition with various practical geometric arts so as to re-stage the world as a series of susceptible situations which can be ridden rather than rigidly controlled [*continues*]

Abstract of a paper entitled 'Pass it on: Towards a Political Economy of Propensity' delivered by PROFESSOR NIGEL THRIFT at the University of Nottingham's School of Geography Research Seminar

It is a tale of two strikers, one the languid son of communist Bulgaria and the other a workaholic from the slums of Buenos Aires. Dimitar Berbatov and Carlos Tevez have come from opposite corners of planet football to join forces at Manchester United and at times, on the pitch as well as off it, it can seem as if they have no more in common than Todor Zhivkov and Eva Peron.

OLIVER KAY, *The Times*

We're seeing a new Beatles emerging in this new morning of creativity, a series of devices and software constructs that empower us with both the personal meaning of our lives and the intuitive combinations of serendipity.

STEVE GILLMOR, *Financial Times*

CONTRIBUTORS: Tony Blades, Peter Barnes, Jim Reid, Kean Birch, Kieron Smith, Abigail Levene.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

CDC / ACTIS

Why Laing's not short of it

IT was no surprise that the recent report by MPs on the public accounts committee (PAC) into the publicly-owned development fund CDC focused on chief executive Richard Laing's "extraordinary" £1m salary – achieved by linking bonuses to profits rather than development, and by ignoring rules that should have limited how much public money he trousered.

As *Eye* readers will recall, instead of comparing CDC executives' salaries with those at similar international development funds as the rules required, CDC only looked at the riches on offer in the private equity industry. Once caught out, it quickly found an amenable "independent consultant" to say this was the right comparison all along. But the PAC, whose report was published at the end of last month, would have none of it. "Besides enjoying the security of working in a publicly owned body [Laing has been at CDC for ten years], CDC executives do not have to compete for money to invest," said the MPs.

The last *Eye* pointed out how CDC and its PR advisers at Quiller (fees: £130,000 and counting) had orchestrated a campaign around the report. They could counter the outrage at Laing's pay by claiming that this year's "package" was down 41 percent, at a mere £572,000. But by delaying publication of CDC's annual report until the next day, the already unimpressed MPs couldn't have known that the package included a £347,000 bonus in a year that CDC lost more than £300m and saw its portfolio drop 33 percent in value!

Over Laing's five years as chief executive, CDC has still made money; but, the PAC reported in one telling passage, "some 82 percent of CDC's profits have come from investments made before [2004]". Since then lucky old Laing has trousered £3.5m by riding the value of investments which he inherited and which boomed on the back of rising share prices generally.

It really is a haul-in

ONE landmark in the commercialisation of publicly-owned aid fund CDC, formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation, was the 2004 sale of the business of managing its investments. Sixty percent of Actis, the new private equity outfit formed, was sold to CDC's own bosses led by its then chief executive, Paul Fletcher (pictured).

For a mere £373,000, Fletcher and colleagues acquired a fund management business that was handed on a plate a guaranteed £1bn investment mandate with enormous growth potential. To nobody's surprise Actis immediately began turning profits of up to $18m a year.

Exactly how much of this Fletcher trousers is secret; Actis's accounts declare that in 2007 he bagged $1.6m (worth roughly £800,000 at the time). But, the *Eye* has now established, he also took a personal share of $98m of "incentive payments" that were said misleadingly in Actis's accounts to have gone entirely to "staff". So what was Fletcher's total haul from the poverty-relief business? Actis refuses to say.

In 2007 the *Eye* revealed that the National Audit Office had valued Actis at between £182m and £535m. As a result, MPs asked the NAO to re-examine the original £373,000 sale price. But in a memo released with the public accounts committee's recent report on CDC, the auditors have now agreed with Actis and CDC that the NAO had got its higher figures wrong and that the next-to-bugger-all figure of £373,000 was in fact the correct price.

How so? Among the bizarre reasons given was that for five years up to 2009, all the profits would be taken by the partners, whose shares thus equated to salaries even though the agreements creating Actis make it explicit that the payments are not salaries. This had the effect of appearing to reduce profits and also the business's value. Income expected from 2010 was then heavily discounted by between 13 and 18 percent a year, so that every pound of income expected in 2010 was valued at less than 50p. All this was approved by valuers at KPMG (who went on to earn millions as auditors and tax advisers to Actis), and by an "independent" committee of CDC directors. These included the man who incorrectly approved the CDC bosses' ballooning pay, remuneration committee chairman Andrew Williams, and private equity's own job-slashing "prince of darkness", Tim Parker.

The NAO even overlooked the fact, also exposed in the *Eye*, that Fletcher and chums were *paid* a £2.3m bonus for completing the deal back in 2004. But maybe it was too much to expect the NAO to nail this one: the auditors were in on the 2004 valuation and raised no concerns at the time.

Certainly the auditors' review bears the signs

of some hasty track-covering. Central to the summary was a table comparing Actis's planned income and its actual income from 2004 to 2007. Against a predicted $234m, the NAO reports that Actis received $244m; nothing too alarming there. Except that Actis's accounts show it really received $358m. Why the difference? It turns out the NAO repeated figures given to it by, ahem, Actis, conveniently omitting around $120m of "incentive payments" received from CDC, ie public development funds. Whether the deception keeps the public accounts committee off the scent of this particularly smelly deal remains to be seen.

Less means more

A CRUCIAL element of the Actis sell-off was the valuation of CDC's investment portfolio, since a proportion of any gains on it after 2004 would go to the Actis bosses as what the private equity industry calls "carry". Thus the lower the starting value, the more the Actis partners would pocket when investments were sold.

It therefore looked odd that just before the sale, CDC's investment returns (based on income and increase in investment values) dipped. Whereas both before and after the Actis deal, CDC's investment returns consistently beat the market, in 2003 they mysteriously underperformed by, er, 30 percent – a fact oddly omitted from CDC's accounts when out-performance is always boasted of. This couldn't, speculated *Eye* 1220, be because values had been conveniently suppressed ahead of the sale, could it?

The smallprint of the NAO memo shows that the result was indeed a series of bumper paydays for the Actis bosses. A footnote reveals: "The CDC base case in 2003 envisaged a total gain of about £250m ($450m) generating carry of about £16m ($28m). The gain has been about four times greater and the carry five times greater". So, instead of £16m in profit share, Actis has received £83m, or £67m extra. This would have been worth millions extra to CDC chief executive-turned-Actis boss Paul Fletcher.

The share of profits going to Actis was a generous 8.65 percent for "legacy" investments, ie those it had had no role in buying but had merely inherited. And the profit would have been taxed as capital gains at 10 percent or less, rather than as income at 40 percent. All paid for by the world's poor and the British taxpayer!

DEEPCUT INQUIRY

Secret army

THE Army Board of Inquiry conducted two years ago into the deaths of Geoff Gray and James Collinson, two of the four young recruits who died of gunshot wounds at the Deepcut barracks, is at last ready to report. Armed forces minister Bob Ainsworth is due to make a statement in the Commons on Thursday.

The reports should have been published by Christmas 2007. But after a draft was circulated among the higher reaches of the army and the Ministry of Defence, there was an extraordinary delay. Eventually the board reconvened to allow Colonel Ron Laden, who took over command at Deepcut a few months before Geoff Gray's death, to comment upon it and make changes (see *Eye* 1225).

Eighteen months later and eight years after the deaths, the two families will finally get to read the reports. But they hold little hope of gaining any new insight into what happened to the youngsters in the army's care at the Surrey barracks: how 17-year-old Geoff Gray ended up with two gunshot wounds to the head, one above each eye, while on guard patrol in 2001; and how, six months later, James Collinson, also 17, died from a single shot.

Police and army investigations into their deaths, and into the earlier deaths of Cheryl James, 18, and 20-year-old Sean Benton, were a travesty. The most basic forensic procedures were ignored and crucial evidence lost.

In the case of Geoff Gray, for example, no fingerprints were ever taken from the weapon found near his body to show whether it was his or whether he had fired it; no bullets were recovered to verify if indeed the weapon found was the one that had been fired; and no explanation has been provided as to why the weapons log – which would have shown which soldier was allocated which gun on the night in question – was removed and shredded, or who removed it. Ballistics experts who gave evidence to the board into Geoff's and James's deaths were unable to say whether they were the result of suicide or murder.

Inquests returned open verdicts and the "Deepcut Review" conducted by Nicholas Blake QC in 2006, which was conducted in private and simply reviewed all the material gathered in the flawed police and army investigations and reviews, only served to raise more questions about the deaths in the eyes of the families – although Blake himself performed some wonderful leaps of logic to conclude that the deaths were, "on the balance of probabilities", suicides.

James Collinson

Geoff Gray

He did, however, conclude that the deaths took place in a training establishment that was out of control. Deepcut, with its culture of bullying and neglect, left raw young recruits vulnerable to both sexual predators and tormentors. It was understaffed and underfunded, sexual activity was rampant, hard drinking commonplace, and bullying and arbitrary punishment by sadistic NCOs went unchallenged.

Blake explained at length the litany of failures over the years at Deepcut that left the young recruits vulnerable, but he found no one to blame – not the ministers who pushed through changes and drastic spending cuts; nor the army chiefs in charge of training and recruitment; nor those at the barracks under whose watch things had run riot; nor those who failed to act on repeated reports and warnings.

In a special report, the *Eye* took apart the Blake review, highlighted a number of serious shortcomings and concluded that Blake singularly failed to get to the source of the stink that surrounds Deepcut and the deaths; that there was a negligent failure to address glaring problems at the base that lasted for years.

No one has been held accountable for the appalling treatment of young volunteers who sign up to serve their country, or for the failure to investigate properly the deaths of four young people. Indeed, the bulk of the evidence gathered over the years to this day remains secret. The inquiry reports are unlikely to change that, but they may yet provide further material in the families' fight for a proper public inquiry.

ARMY RECRUITMENT

CRAPITA NEEDS YOU!

ONCE the preserve of senior NCOs on the brink of retirement, the business of army recruitment is to be "outsourced" to a series of private civilian companies.

There's an "industry day" being held later this month and the army is confident of attracting expert bids from the likes of Serco, Manpower and, er, Crapita, all keen to outbid each other for the £100m contract. The fact that none of these companies knows anything about the British military does not seem to have worried the Ministry of Defence.

As any recruiting officer will tell you, many potential soldiers sign up because they can discuss what army life is like with an Old Salt who has been "in" and who knows the ropes. Of course they embellish their accounts with promises of weekends canoeing in Snowdonia and frolicking with their mates on R&R in Cyprus with a bevy of lovelies, but they also tell it like it is: the rainy days at Catterick, the horror bags, vile packed lunches comprised of frozen sandwiches, and the bulling of boots.

When recruitment was privatised in Scotland, in 2001, recruits got a far rosier picture delivered to them by civvies who had absolutely no idea what service life was like. Recruitment figures increased, but for every 100 hopefuls who made it on to the parade square, 70 decided army life was not for them and never made it past phase 1 basic training.

The RAF regiment sergeant who, while watching a new batch of chavs shuffling past him at RAF Halton, announced: "See that? That's the fecking future! How I weep!" is in good company. The "hard sell" techniques used by civilian recruitment consultants do not produce good results.

But that won't bother the private recruitment companies, who know that even if they are unsuccessful they will still receive the cash owed to them by their legally binding contract with the MoD. And, as with other defence procurement contracts, any cost overruns will have to be picked up by the customer, the cash-strapped British army.

'Squarebasher'

NHS plc

ISTCs: A crying sham

ANOTHER crumbling New Labour initiative, independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) for NHS operations, has been exposed as a shambolic waste of money.

ISTCs were supposed to provide low-cost operations to an overstretched NHS. But they have long been suspected of creaming off the most lucrative ones under favourable contracts without providing the quality to be found in the NHS.

A 2006 parliamentary report questioned their value for money and asked the National Audit Office to look into it. Several billions of pounds of public money were at stake, but the audit body has oddly shied away from the subject despite reportedly expressing some concern over the ISTCs' performance and £100m+ procurement costs 18 months ago.

Now academics Allyson Pollock (pictured) and Graham Kirkwood at Edinburgh University have obtained the contract for one ISTC under Scottish freedom of information laws (contracts in England remain confidential). This shows that the NHS in Tayside paid an ISTC run by Amicus Healthcare – a joint venture of private equity firm Apax and South Africa's Netcare – for 90 percent of referrals even though the centre only performed 32 percent of them. The academics estimate that Tayside's overpayments could be dwarfed by those across England, where the NHS could have been stung by up to £927m for operations not performed.

The £5bn ISTC programme was pushed through by the Department of Health's commercial directorate, set up in 2003 by the then health secretary Alan Milburn, now earning £30k a year from the private equity firm Bridgepoint that owns ISTCs through Alliance Medical. The directorate was run by American Ken Anderson (since decamped to Swiss bank UBS's private health investments) and was exposed by the *Eye* two years ago as home to 220 consultants on an average £238k a year, much channeled through tax-efficient service companies. It has since been quietly disbanded without ever having faced the scrutiny it warranted.

EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

Prize chump

HEALTH minister Lord Darzi is dangling a financial carrot to encourage NHS staff to help the government find efficiencies and savings of £15bn over the next three years. Rewards of up to £5m each will go to those who most impress the panel of experts in Darzi's Den, which holds a total pot of £240m in prize money.

Darzi cites challenges such as combating the increasing burden of childhood obesity, or dementia in the elderly. But how about tackling the so-called "transaction costs" of healthcare, started by the introduction of an internal market by the Tories and accelerated by Labour's privatisation agenda?

In the old NHS days, administrative costs were no more than 5 percent of its annual budget. By the mid-90s they accounted for 12 percent. With subsequent wholesale market-based measures such as payments by results, patient choice and self-governing foundation trusts, coupled with the costs of management consultants, private finance initiatives, independent treatment centres etc, administrative costs have soared to 20 percent of the budget – about £20bn a year.

Reduce that and Darzi can make his savings in one go. Or how about axing the most disastrous computer project in British history, the NHS National Programme for IT – £12.7bn and rising? Cheques please to Lord Gnome.

BRITISH WATERWAYS

Canal argy-bargy

BARELY had it been announced that British Waterways' £500m-worth of canal and riverside property was *not* to be flogged off to boost government finances after all, than the corporation revealed its plan to leave the public sector altogether.

BW has a £30m annual shortfall in its finances after years of cuts by the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (to make up for Defra's cock-up over farm subsidies). The budget nightmare has had a serious effect on maintenance and halted restoration work such as the Cotswold Canal scheme (*Eyes passim*). Last month BW, which manages more than 2,000 miles of waterways, announced plans to axe 100 office staff as part of a cost-cutting restructuring plan.

At the same time the quango, which is the last remaining part of the British Transport Commission still in public ownership, put forward its plan to detach itself from government control altogether by becoming a trust or charity within the next ten years. In *TwentyTwenty: A Vision for the future of our canals and rivers*, chairman Tony Hales says: "The private sector built the canals, the public sector rescued them and I believe the third sector can be their future."

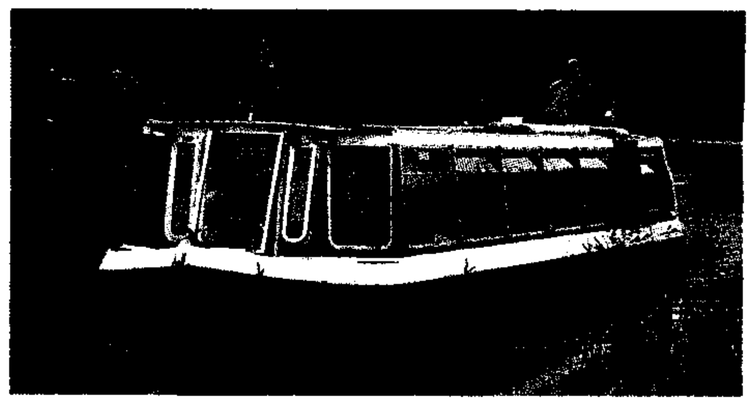
The paper proposes a "gradual migration" to the voluntary sector, where it believes it can benefit from people's "passion and support" for waterways. The Inland Waterways Association (IWA), which *is* a charity run by volunteers and has been fundraising and working to save canals since 1946, questions whether the move would lead to full funding of the network and says it wants to know how public benefits will be safeguarded if the waterways aren't in the public sector any more.

EARLIER this year BW's property empire fell under the beady eyes of the Treasury's Operational Efficiency Programme in its search for juicy public assets to flog.

In the end, the budget-day announcement didn't opt for the fire sale that boaters had been campaigning against. Instead, the waterside property portfolio, which is currently run in-house by BW's property director and a team of surveyors and brings in a healthy £45m from leases, will be turned into a wholly-owned subsidiary company (staffed by the same people).

According to BW, there won't be much change at all. "There will be no change in the day-to-day management of the portfolio and none of the current tenants and occupiers will be affected," it soothed. "The company will be wholly owned by British Waterways so ultimate ownership and governance will not change." So, er, why do it then?

As the Inland Waterways Association observed: "This could make it easier to hive off the portfolio at a later stage" – maybe once property prices start to climb again?



A BOAT explosion in a Thames lock over the bank holiday weekend brought home the importance of lock keepers being close by when an emergency happens – which should never have been in doubt in the first place.

The lock keeper at Old Windsor Lock safely cleared the area after a boat caught fire, then exploded. Before the emergency services arrived, he had assisted the family on the boat to shore and evacuated all the other boats that were in the lock at the time.

None of this might have been possible had the Environment Agency gone ahead with its sale of lockhouses, leaving lock keepers to rely on phones, cars and, er, web cams to ensure safety on the river. The agency only abandoned its bonkers plan last December after strong campaigning by river users (*Eyes passim*). Good thing the penny-pinching quangocrats didn't get their way.

POLICE CORRUPTION

Snakes in the grass

ONCE again the "supergrass" system, whereby one villain receives a lesser sentence in return for incriminating others, has been called into question in a high-profile investigation into corruption at Scotland Yard (*Eyes passim*).

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) has just referred the conviction of two former south London detectives to the court of appeal because hundreds of pages of evidence that undermined their prosecution were never disclosed to the defence.

The flagship corruption probe, overseen by two of Scotland Yard's most senior officers, cost millions of pounds and was used to show that supergrass evidence could secure safe convictions… Except the CCRC found that documents undermining the credibility of two supergrass witnesses had been kept secret and therefore caused a "miscarriage of justice". Among the material not released was evidence of a plot by two female drug dealers to concoct false allegations.

The prosecution maintains the non-disclosure was an "oversight". And while the watchdog's 53-page report said it was "unable to uncover conclusive evidence of deliberate misconduct" by the police or the CPS, "the handling of the disclosure fell far short of the standards necessary to secure a fair trial". During a secret hearing, the Old Bailey judge had been wrongly assured by police and prosecutors that all material had been handed over.

The two detectives, Bob Clark and Chris Drury, from the East Dulwich branch of the South East Regional Crime Squad, complained to the commission in 2002, two years into their sentences of 12 and 10 years respectively for conspiracy to supply drugs and pervert the course of justice. The pair were said to have been prime movers in a "groovy gang" of corrupt detectives, informants and crooks working together to sell drugs seized from rival dealers.

The CCRC findings into their case could help three other detectives whose convictions relied on the same supergrass evidence. It is also an embarrassment for assistant commissioner John Yates, who led the anti-corruption inquiry – codenamed Operation Russia – between 1998 and 2001 when he was a superintendent. In 2007, Yates told a hostile committee of MPs looking into his handling of the cash-for-honours inquiry that the supergrass system he presided over was one of the "greatest successes" in tackling police corruption.

The appeal is likely to hear a root-and-branch attack on him and the supergrass system, which is now deployed with gusto in anti-terror operations presided over by new boss… Yates of the Yard.

Cost in translation

ONE IN 15 interpreters used by Thames Valley Police isn't properly qualified or registered since the force outsourced translation to the company Language Line last year, say figures released under a freedom of information request.

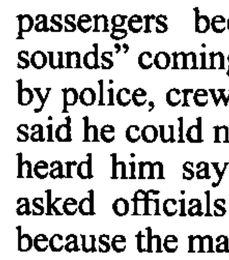
According to guidance from the Association of Chief Police Officers and an agreement with the courts and Home Office, police should use interpreters from the National Register of Public Sector Interpreters (NRPSI) in interviews with non-English speakers or deaf defendants, victims or witnesses. "The standard requirement is that every interpreter working in courts and police stations should be registered," says the document, adding that forces considering outsourcing interpretation must make sure it doesn't compromise compliance with this standard.

Thames Valley shouldn't struggle to find suitable translators, being within commuting distance of one of the world's most multilingual cities. But since outsourcing it can only provide 94 percent NRPSI coverage and has had to use a non-registered interpreter on 60 occasions.

Thames Valley is far from unique. In Scotland it was recently revealed that foreign students without the necessary diplomas had been hired through an agency to interpret in cases ranging from custody disputes to rape. Lawyers fear mistakes could lead to both wrongful convictions and acquittals.

In March, Manchester MP John Leech told a Westminster Hall debate there was "irrefutable evidence" of a link between outsourcing and low levels of use of properly qualified and registered interpreters. Sadly, said Leech, the evidence hadn't dissuaded Greater Manchester Police from considering outsourcing.

BA PROTEST



Airline is grounded

JUSTICE has finally prevailed for Ayodeji Omotade, the British Airways passenger who protested about the treatment of an asylum seeker being deported on a flight out of Heathrow in March last year – and found himself handcuffed, hauled off the plane and facing criminal charges (see *Eye* 1216).

The 39-year-old IT consultant was cleared at Brent magistrates' court of behaving in a "threatening, abusive, insulting and disorderly" way towards a member of the flight crew, after other passengers submitted evidence on his behalf.

The asylum seeker, apparently a member of a banned protest group in Nigeria, was being restrained in a row of seats behind Mr Omotade. Several passengers became concerned about "agonising sounds" coming from the man as he was surrounded by police, crew and immigration staff. Mr Omatade said he could not actually see the man, but when he heard him say in pidgin English "I will die", he asked officials to stop whatever they were doing because the man was saying they were killing him.

A steward told Mr Omotade the man was "faking it", and that the officers were simply doing their job. After an explanation from the captain over the intercom, the deportee, in chains and handcuffs and in some distress, was removed. Passengers returned to their seats to await take-off, but the steward then returned with police officers, pointed out Mr Omotade and said he was the one who had orchestrated a protest. He too was handcuffed and hauled away. After eight hours in custody he was released late at night, with no money, no possessions and facing criminal charges.

His removal triggered further protests from passengers – one who was contacted by the *Eye* and later submitted evidence on Mr Omotade's behalf. Akin Sayerrs, a 44-year-old senior manager, said that all Mr Omotade had done was to ask for what was a very uncomfortable situation to be resolved.

Last week, district judge Deborah Wright rejected the evidence of crew, police and immigration officials, who had described Mr Omotade as a "raging bull". As the *Eye* pointed out last summer, he had simply "made a polite but forcible complaint".

You can contact the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017 or email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

In the City

THE furore over MPs' expenses claims has revealed just how much preferential treatment members receive compared to other high earners.

Slipped quietly into the Income Tax (Earnings & Pensions) Act 2003 by the Chancellor, one G Brown, were a number of exemptions for "special kinds of employee". Ranked only after ministers of religion and ahead of the armed forces, oil workers or miners came "MPs, government ministers". Their exemptions covered more than any other group – not just overnight expenses but also travel, transport, subsistence and even termination without extreme prejudice from their enviable existence.

The second home free exemption clause 292 states:

Overnight expenses allowances of MPs

(1) No liability to income tax arises in respect of an overnight expenses allowance paid to a Member of the House of Commons in accordance with a resolution of that House.

(2) "Overnight expenses allowance" means an allowance expressed to be in respect of additional expenses necessarily incurred by the Member in staying overnight away from the Member's only or main residence, for the purpose of performing parliamentary duties — (a) in the London area, as defined in such a resolution, or (b) in the Member's constituency.

Just what "necessarily" means has been severely challenged by the receipts presented and paid for gardens, tennis courts and light bulbs.

Like much of the wonderful tax-free world inhabited by MPs, their exemptions flow from statutory provisions they have voted through for themselves, rather than dispensations available to the taxpayer only in rare instances with the grudging agreement of the taxman. The effect has been to create for MPs whole rivers of exempt income denied to their constituents.

MPs have their very own tax office – Public Department 1 in Cardiff – which deals with sensitive tax files. The word among tax accountants is that the inspectors there, like officials in the Commons' discredited Fees Office, know better than to raise too many questions. What's good enough for the Fees Office is likely to be OK in Cardiff. The MP cheat's Bible is the "Green Book" on salaries, allowances and pensions rules.

MPs, like other celebrity clients of PD1, alone do not now have to submit their tax returns online in order to benefit from the 31 January deadline. Too insecure! They can submit their returns non-electronically in January, whereas other taxpayers must do so by October. Many MPs have the benefit of top tax advice when it comes to filing their returns and weaving their way through the loopholes.

And when home secretary Jacqui Smith and other expense abusers dwell on the likelihood that next year they will pay the price at the ballot box for their bath plugs and pet food, they can be comforted by the fact that the first £30,000 of the golden goodbye they automatically receive on being ejected from the Westminster gravy train will be tax-free – even though it is a contractual benefit. This is 50-100 percent of their last salary – now £63,000 – plus "winding-up payments" including bonuses to family members they employ. Mere mortals have to rely on such payments being discretionary if they are to get that £30,000 tax break.

HMRC insists that the test for all employees is the same – ie whether a benefit is received "wholly, exclusively and necessarily" in the course of employment. On that basis it is hard to see how many of the tax-free items claimed, particularly for their supposed second homes, qualify for MPs, even if they were accepted by the Fees Office. But it is Green Book rules.

A basic rule for the taxman is to avoid duality of purpose. The claim must be for an item which is either business or personal, not both. The former is allowable, the latter not. Yet an MP can go shopping for food at the local supermarket, whereas any other employee usually cannot. The normal rule is that you eat to live, not eat to work, so food is normally not tax-deductible. But not in the Green Book rules.

Even so much of what has emerged from MPs' receipts would be hard to justify as not being personal benefit – "bad taste" Artex ceilings, pergolas, mock-Tudor beams, glitter toilet seats, pouffes, not to mention porn films. Try claiming any of those from your local tax inspector.

MPs have always, uniquely for employees, enjoyed a tax break on second homes because it was accepted that they were necessary for those who represented constituencies well away from London. An important point in the debate about this and much else regarding MPs is that the tax rules and the Green Book rules for allowances are mutually exclusive. So what counts as a second home for Green Book purposes can count as a main home for capital gains tax and thus not be taxable – as Hazel Blears profitably exploited. In the same way, the rules for UK residence when it comes to being a peer are very different from those set down by the taxman – as Lord Michael Ashcroft could no doubt explain.

But MPs are not unique in being able to avoid capital gains tax on second homes. The situation is complex but there are also allowances available to both MPs and property dealers, when not one and the same, to avoid capital gains tax based on the fact that an individual can always nominate or elect any home at any time to be their main or primary residence and so avoid capital gains tax on its sale. All they have to prove is that they live or did live there. This election can also be done within two years of purchase. And a three-year window of similar opportunity can be achieved by moving into the second home for a month and then designating it as the primary residence.

The only problem is if the home has been let, as that can complicate the tax-free nature of any gain. Otherwise gains tax can be mitigated by apportioning it to just the time a property was not the primary residence.

All this is available to any taxpayer, not just MPs. But it seems that some of them – Blears, James Purnell and Geoff Hoon – have gamed the system to their advantage and to HMRC's disadvantage. But then why not, when the property bubble, especially in London, meant that the taxpayer could pay for MPs to play and walk away with a tax-free profit as the values of their homes and flats soared thanks to their friend Gordon.

Since the Seventies the provision of accommodation as a benefit has been a chargeable item to executives. However, ministers have a get-out-of-tax card called security. If it is necessary to live in a secure building – because you are so loved by the voters or others on the receiving end of government policy – then that would not be taxable. This special case is believed to make the provision of "grace and favour" homes in reality a non-taxable benefit in kind, even if they are in theory chargeable to tax.

HMRC may well be excised by what the public sees understandably as abuse by MPs of their allowances. But tax experts have doubts that they will be able to get very far unless fraud can be proved. Hard if not impossible, given the vagueness of the Green Book rules – witness the decision not to prosecute Derek Conway despite what looked very much like fraud when done by a Social Security benefit claimant.

The seeming blanket exemption provided by the 2003 act and earlier legislation means the Green Book rules apply. And they are a licence to steal.

WORD both in Washington and within the Serious Farce Office is that discussions with BAE Systems on a deal to make its corruption case go away are progressing, and that an announcement could come sooner rather than later.

BAE would pay a very large fine – as Siemens and Halliburton did – and agree to change its ways and sin no more in return for no prosecution. Delays are believed to be due to the exact terms and the need to get everybody onside, not just in the US and the UK but also Switzerland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Romania and South Africa. BAE would want any deal to be global, with no loose ends. And it needs a deal to avoid a prosecution, which could ban it from the vital US arms market.

THIS is serial financial fantasist "Dangerous Fast Eddie" Davenport's latest trap for the unwary. It has been running regularly in the *Sunday Times*.

OLD UK COMPANIES WANTED

Must be pre 1999.
Dormant, Formerly Trading or Trading.
All considered. Top money paid.

Contact Polly McCabe 07500 799309 or email company details to polly@davenporttrust.com

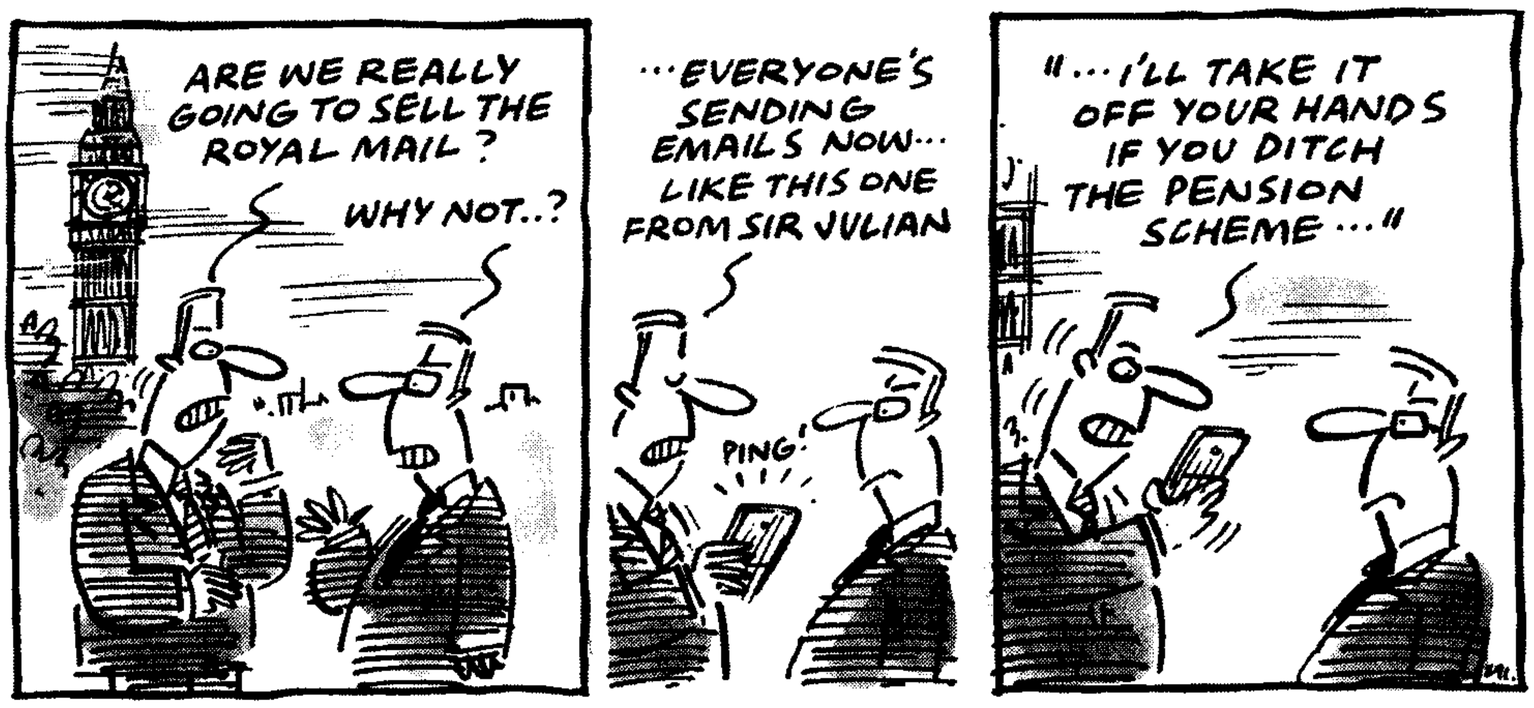
Looks like "Lord" Eddie figures the days of Gresham – established in 1958 but bought by Davenport in 2005 – are coming to an end, amid complaints from a growing number of disappointed respondents to previous ads in the *Financial Times* and via its website. Eddie wants an old company so that he can pretend that longevity equals respectability – something *Eye* readers know is far from the truth where Davenport is concerned.

After a lengthy investigation by the old Department of Timidity & Inaction's Companies Investigation Branch was referred to the SFO, which passed, it appears that the latest regulator to consider milord Davenport is the Fundamentally Supine Authority. Meanwhile, Gresham has still failed to file any accounts – they were due last July – since those for 2006, which, the auditors claimed, contained their forged signature of approval. And the ads roll on.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG


ARE WE REALLY GOING TO SELL THE ROYAL MAIL ?
WHY NOT..?
...EVERYONE'S SENDING EMAILS NOW... LIKE THIS ONE FROM SIR JULIAN
PING!
"...I'LL TAKE IT OFF YOUR HANDS IF YOU DITCH THE PENSION SCHEME..."

IN THE COURTS

Eady does it

CONTROVERSIAL libel judge Mr Justice Eady was busy again last week demonstrating why newspaper and magazine editors, as well as academics, the United Nations and foreign writers who have been hauled into his court by libel tourists, have come to worry about his influence (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*).

As the *Eye* reported in December, Simon Singh, one of Britain's most respected science writers, had criticised the British Chiropractic Association's Chiropractic Awareness Week in an article for the *Guardian.* He argued that the therapy was the invention of a strange Mid-Westerner called Daniel David Palmer who let loose a series of wacky ideas on the world of alternative medicine.

The British Chiropractic Association sued for libel. It did not sue the *Guardian* but went for Singh personally. His savings and his family's home were on the line. But Singh is a brave man. He refused to renounce his considered opinion and resolved to fight the case.

Last week it came before – oh go on, guess. At the request of both sides, Eady had to decide on the meaning and status of the allegedly libellous statements Singh had published.

Eady heard that the British Chiropractic Association objected to the following paragraph from Singh about its back-slapping members: "The British Chiropractic Association claims that their members can help treat children with colic, sleeping and feeding problems, frequent ear infections, asthma and prolonged crying, even though there is not a jot of evidence. This organisation is the respectable face of the chiropractic profession and yet it happily promotes bogus treatments."

The main issues were what was the effect of using the word "bogus" and whether Singh could defend his piece as "fair comment". Singh's lawyers said he had gone on to write in the *Guardian*: "I can confidently label these treatments as bogus because I have co-authored a book about alternative medicine with the world's first professor of complementary medicine, Edzard Ernst. He learned chiropractic techniques himself and used them as a doctor. This is when he began to see the need for some critical evaluation. Among other projects, he examined the evidence from 70 trials exploring the benefits of chiropractic therapy in conditions unrelated to the back. He found no evidence to suggest that chiropractors could treat any such conditions."

The judge took the BCA's side. It was *not* a "comment piece", Eady ruled; and because Singh had said that the association was happily promoting bogus treatments, he did not merely have to prove that chiropractic ideas were wrong or poorly supported by medical evidence: he had to show that chiropractors were engaged in "quackery". In other words, Singh could only win if he could prove that they were being deliberately dishonest and promoting treatments when they knew there was no evidence to support them.

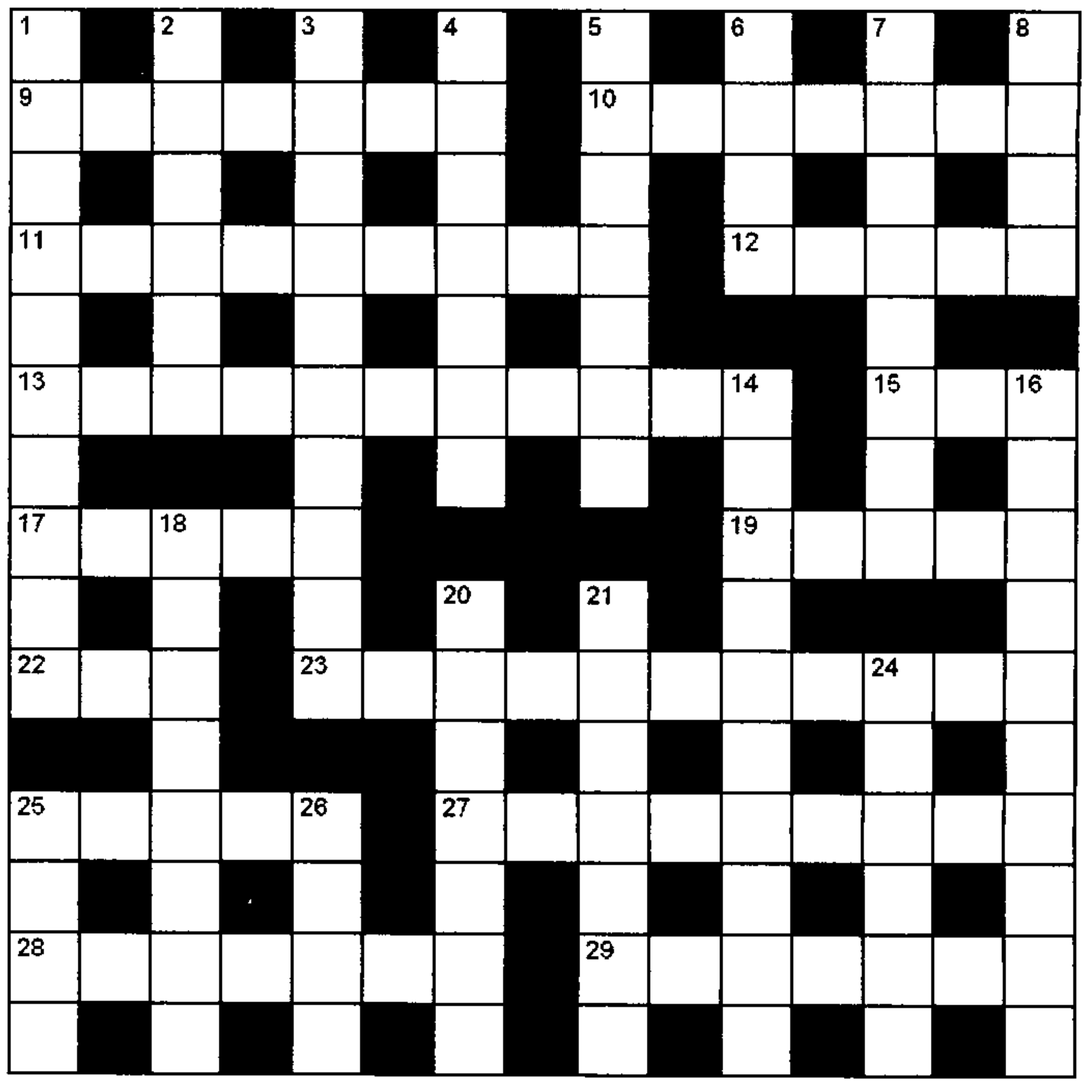
Singh must now decide whether to risk tens of thousands of pounds more by going to the appeal court because Eady has set him a frighteningly high hurdle to jump. For there is no doubt that believers in chiropractic medicine are sincere, as are believers in astrology, witchcraft and fairies at the bottom of the garden. Trying to prove otherwise is a fool's errand.

To put Eady's decision into context, in 2008 the UN Human Rights Committee condemned libel judgments from the English courts for discouraging "critical media reporting on matters of serious public interest". The *Eye* has been saying much the same for years.

'Ratbiter'

EYE CROSSWORD 391

by Cyclops



£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 21 May 2009

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

ACROSS

9 Screwing Daffy Duck takes seconds? Not when you're in top form (3-4)

10 Volume produced on turning over girl with Vaseline initially inserted (7)

11 Colin Powell at last moving to back Bush's end, leaves little to the imagination (9)

12 Posh, extremely randy, squeezing zit – head to rear! (5)

13/15 Bollocks: drops one to get naked (5,1,5,3)

17 Spiritual guide's talk: "get end away" (5)

19 Dope ring after mum (5)

22/6 Roger to get this, say, in Beau's embrace (3-4)

23 Banker maybe, ready to stand by Labour's leader (one who's finished) (11)

25/8 Source of support for Obama? Not Hillary for some time (5,4)

27 A toothy thing recruited by whips, remains underground here (9)

28 Hailer broadcast started by Conservative twit (7)

29 Crapper's first loo exploited good north eastern toilet water (7)

DOWN

1/24 "Blasted civilians, getting in the way of US war aims," according to Pentagon? (10,6)

2 Clinton's first affair (female abandoned) rocked the land (6)

3 Self-conceit: can Sir Dicky miss out? (10)

4 Embrace, taking drugs and sit round university (7)

5 Wearing Obama's underpants? Almost (not to go on about it) (2,5)

6 See 22ac.

7 Hit externally, Left reeling from declared policy of standing party (8)

8 See 25ac.

14 The soft option for violent inmates? (6,4)

16 Taking head of financier's shoulder, I ran riot (10)

18 Lofty's on crack – great chance of being a star? (3,5)

20 Critic's a tit (7)

21 "Cyclops's jams," said spiritual types (7)

24 See 1dn.

25 "F — legislation!" – Verity (4)

26 Not the full frontal Camilla's powder (4)

Crossword 390 winner: DAVID HAWKSWORTH

ACROSS: 1 Shrub 4 Teararse 8 Smug 9 Opposition 10 Overshoe 11 Zenith 12 Brazil nuts 14 Euro 15 Ugli 17 Repression 20 Gorgon 21 Negative 23 Infighting 24 Thor 25 Brethren 26 Dress.

DOWN: 1 Samovar 2 Roger 3 Brothel 4 Topped-up pension 5 Assizes 6 Attendees 7 Snorter 13 Zeitgeist 16 Groaner 17 Rancher 18 Engaged 19 Obvious 22 Tithe.

HUSBAND

It's Dogged as does it

Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust PLC

Your low cost choice for global investment

Scottish Mortgage is an investment trust that makes global investments in companies that aim for above-average returns. And our persistent belief in this approach offers real long-term growth potential.

Your investment should be regarded as long-term, and its value, and any income from it, can fall as well as rise. You may not get back what you originally invested.

To find out more about Scottish Mortgage, and the different investment options available, visit www.scottishmortgageit.com or call 0800 027 0133.

BAILLIE GIFFORD

Managing investment trusts since 1909

Your call may be recorded. Your personal data is held and used by Baillie Gifford Savings Management Ltd in accordance with data protection legislation. We may use your information to send you information about Baillie Gifford products, funds or special offers and to contact you for business research purposes. We will only disclose your information to other companies within the Baillie Gifford group and to agents appointed by us for these purposes. You can withdraw your consent to receiving further marketing communications from us and to being contacted for business research purposes at any time. You also have the right to review and amend your data at any time.

PT/SM

SAVE MONEY BY BUYING PRIVATE EYE ON SUBSCRIPTION

Save £11 on the shop price

Only £28 for 26 issues

- Save 28% on the shop price
- Free access to digital downloads
- Manage your account online

Subscribe online at
www.subsonline.co.uk
or call our order hotline 01795 414 870 quoting code N1236
or complete the order form below and send with payment to:
PRIVATE EYE, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA

☐ **Yes! I would like to subscribe to PRIVATE EYE for one year (26 issues).**

☐ UK £28 ☐ Europe (Airmail) £34 ☐ Rest of World (Airmail) £38

1 Your details: (for gift subscriptions – this is where we send the gift card)

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

Email

* Don't miss out. We send our best offers by email.

PRIVATE EYE is serious about protecting your privacy. We do not share or sell data about our subscribers.

2 ☐ **Gift subscription. Please send Private Eye to:**

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

3 Payment details:

☐ by Direct Debit – just call 01795 414 870 with your bank details
☐ by cheque made payable to PRIVATE EYE
☐ by credit card. Please debit my Visa Mastercard Switch

Card number:

Valid from Expiry date Switch issue no

Cardholder's signature_____Date_____

SOURCE CODE: N1236

Stauer *Premier Collection*

"As a professional restorer of antique and classic watches for major museums, I recently reviewed the movement and individual parts of the Stauer Noire watch. The assembly and the precision of the mechanical movement are excellent."

George Thomas
Tolson Watch Company

I'll take mine black...no sugar

In the early 1930's watch manufacturers took a clue from Henry Ford's favourite quote concerning his automobiles, "You can have any colour as long as it is black." Black dialled watches became the rage especially with pilots and race drivers. Of course, since the black dial went just as well with a black tuxedo, the adventurer's black dial watch easily moved from the airplane hangar to dancing at the nightclub. Now, Stauer brings back the "Noire", a design based on an elegant timepiece built in 1936. Black dialled, complex automatics from the 1930's have recently hit new heights at auction. One was sold for in excess of $600,000 (£305,000). We thought that you might like to have an affordable version that will be much more accurate than the original.

Basic black with a twist. Not only are the dial, hands and face vintage, but we used a 27-jewelled automatic movement. This is the kind of engineering desired by fine watch collectors worldwide. But since we design this classic movement on state of the art, computer-controlled Swiss built machines, the accuracy is excellent. Our Accuracy Standard is an astounding 99.94%. Three interior dials display day, month and date. The screw-down crown keeps the watch water resistant to 5 atms. And, we have priced the luxurious Stauer 22k Gold-fused Noire at a price to keep you in the black...now only £129.99!

An offer that will make you dig out your old tux. The movement of the Stauer Noire wrist watch carries an extended two year warranty. But first enjoy this handsome timepiece risk-free for 30 days. If you are not thrilled with the quality and rare design, simply send it back for a full refund of the purchase price.

Watch Specs:
- ***27-jewel automatic movement***
- ***Black face w/ luminous marks***
- ***0.5" thick gold-fused case***
- ***9.75" leather crocodile embossed band***
- ***6.5"–9" wrist size***
- ***5 ATM water resistance***
- ***39mm face diameter***

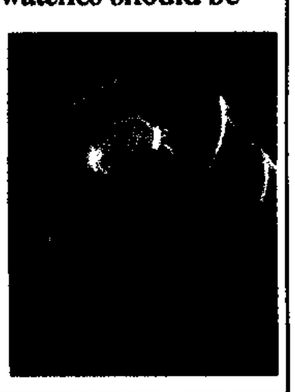
The 27 jewels and hand-assembled parts beneath the solid back drive this classic masterpiece.

Stauer 22k Gold Fused Noire Watch — Was £199.99 — **SAVE £70** — £129.99 + £6.99 p&p & insurance
Product Code :14685

Also available in Stainless Steel — Was £149.99 — **SAVE £50** — £99.99 + £6.99 p&p & insurance
Product Code :14587

Automatic Watch Winder

Whether it cost £100 or £100,000, for their own mechanical health all automatic watches should be kept wound and running to ensure proper lubrication and to cut down on wear. Enjoy the convenience and accuracy of our automatic watch winder and keep perfect time.



Automatic Watch Winder £49.99 plus £4.99 p&p
Product Code :14680

NOT AVAILABLE IN STORES

CALL NOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS LIMITED OFFER

0871 421 5555

PLEASE QUOTE CODE E12PESN WHEN ORDERING

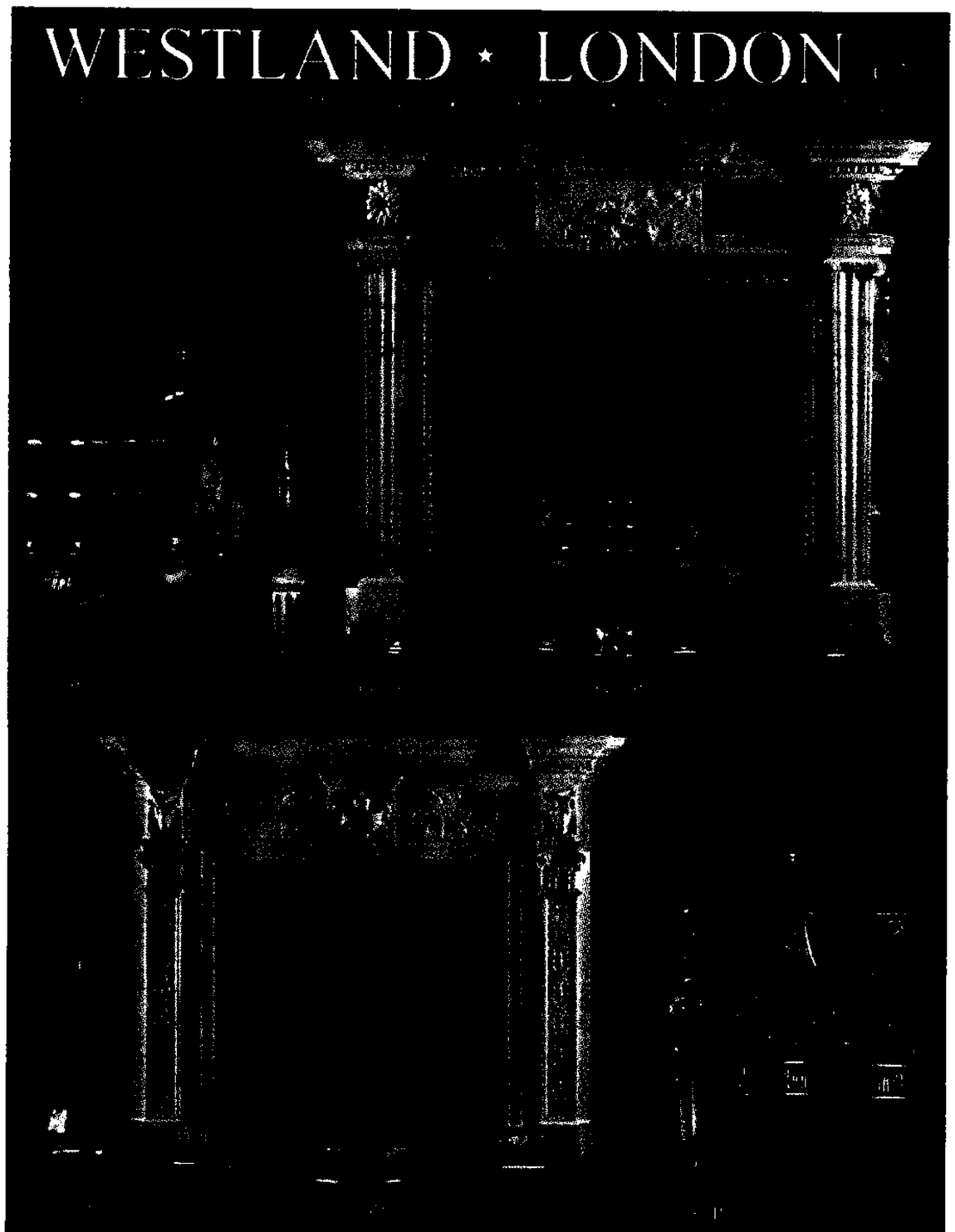
CUSTOMER SERVICES: 0871 421 0010

Stauer
HERITAGE OF ART & SCIENCE

Stauer, Euro House, Cremers Rd, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3US.
For orders by post please make cheques payable to "The Stauer Collection". HSS t/a Stauer. Reg No. 2828214. **IMPORTANT** - Payment for goods may only be made by Credit/Debit Card, Cheque or Postal Order. Please do not send cash. No liability will be accepted for cash payments that are mislaid in transit.

CALL 24 HRS 7 DAYS 0871 421 5555 OR VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW. GoldNoire.co.uk

WESTLAND • LONDON



www.westlandlondon.com

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, ST MICHAEL'S STREET, LONDON, W2 1QA

TEL +44 (0)20 7221 3090 e-mail: westland@westlandlondon.com

Margaret Thatcher –
Mother of the Nation or
Monster from the Blue Lagoon?

CARTOON MUSEUM
35 Little Russell Street, London WC1A 2HH
TUE - SAT: 10.30 - 17.30 SUN: 12 - 17.30
020 7580 8155 www.cartoonmuseum.org

Email campaigns@muscular-dystrophy.org
Visit www.muscular-dystrophy.org

Dystrophy 50

DOES SITTING MAKE YOUR BACK ACHE?

The MEDesign Backfriend relieves back pain

- More than 600,000 used in 35 countries
- Light and portable, for use in any seat
- Height adjustable back
- Available in 7 colours
- 12 month guarantee
- 14 day home trial
- Made by MEDesign® Ltd in the UK

FOR YOUR FREE COPY OF MEDESIGN'S BACK PACK CATALOGUE
CALL us on 01704 542373 or E-MAIL to pe@medesign.co.uk
POST the coupon to MEDesign Ltd. FREEPOST. Southport. PR8 1BR

9-PE5

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Post Code: _____

THE

GALLERY

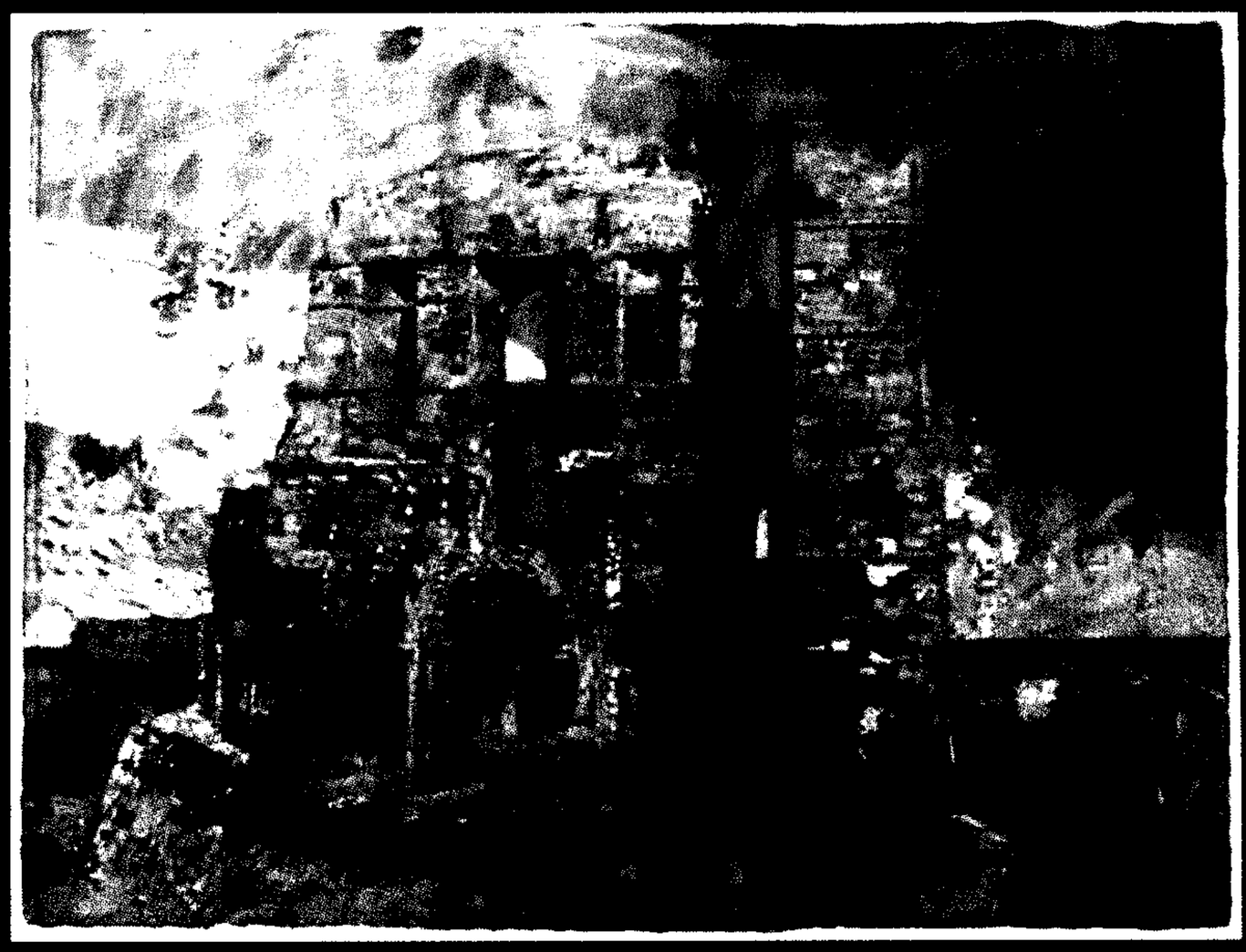
DAVID TRESS

THE RUDE & BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE

16 May – 6 June 2009

Open 9.30am - 5.30pm

Monday to Saturday



Lindisfarne Priory, mixed media on paper, 22" x 30" ins

An Exhibition of 45 New & Recent Paintings

The Old Dairy Plant Fosseway Business Park Stratford Road Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 9NQ

T: 01608 652255 E: info@johndaviesgallery.com www.johndaviesgallery.com

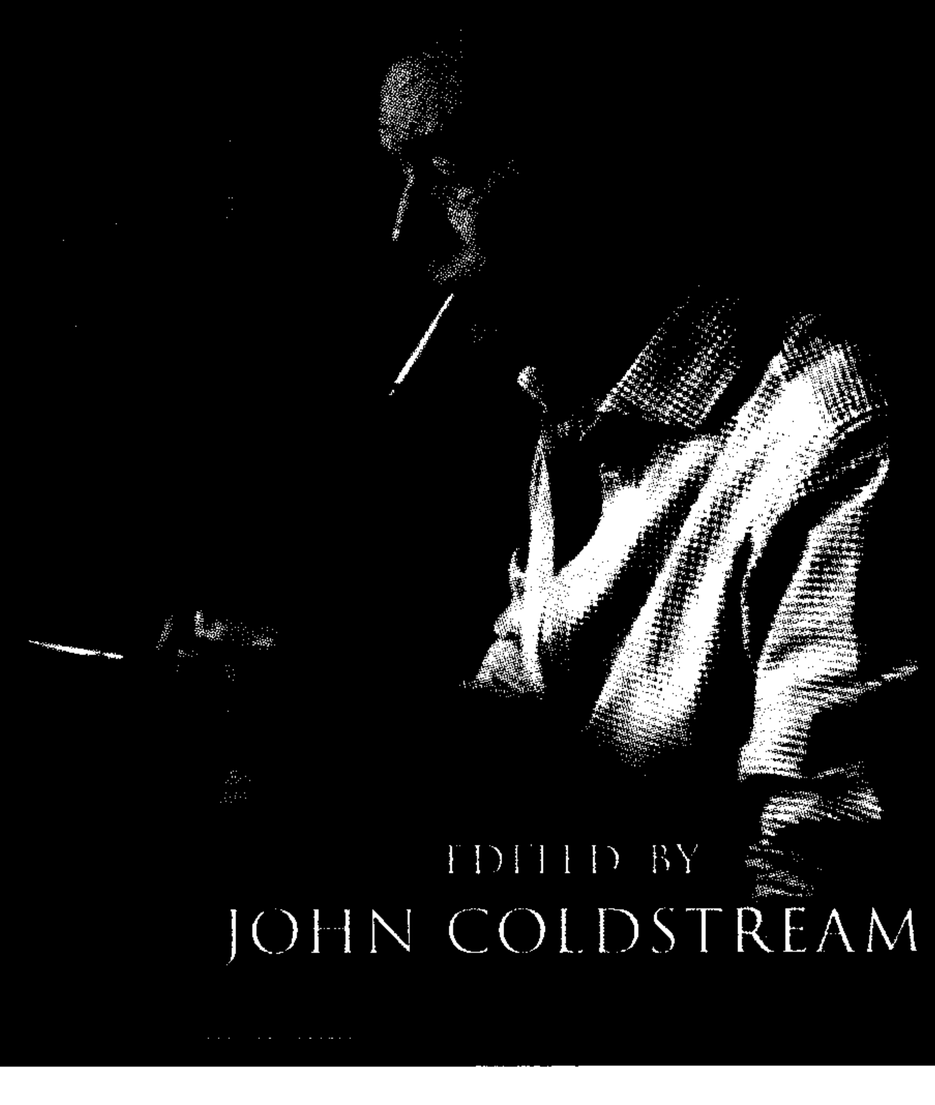
Colour Catalogue, including an appreciation by John Russell Taylor, £10

www.dirkbogarde.co.uk

Ever, Dirk

'Funny, petulant and wildly entertaining'

SUNDAY TIMES



Available Now

A Phoenix Paperback

www.orionbooks.co.uk

EDITED BY

JOHN COLDSTREAM

PRIVATE EYE

Advertise here and reach over 818,000 potential customers, it's so easy!
(Source: NRS, Dec 2008)

Display Advertising please call Ian Mehrer on 020 7878 2366
Semi-Display Advertising please call Robert Grant on 020 7878 2308
Classified Advertising please call Angela Lawrence on 020 7240 9129 / 020 7878 2314

www.eyeadvertise.co.uk **email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com**

£2.75 per word (£25 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. For just £10 extra your ad can also appear on our website: **www.eyeadvertise.co.uk** All charges inc VAT

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Classified / Semi Display for 29th May issue will be 1pm, Tuesday 19th May

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Display for 29th May issue will be 5pm, Wednesday 20th May

Eye Art

PSSST. WANNA BUY A BANKSY? Visit www.spitalfieldsartmarket.co.uk

CREATE YOUR MASTERPIECE at La Muse Writers' and Artists' Retreat: www.lamuseinn.com

CAST BRONZE PORTRAIT HEADS OR TORSO made from 3D scan or photos. sales@rapidart.co.uk 01628 622768

GET A DIFFERENT ART, use your imagination : www.nicolasyoungart.co.uk

Eye Wear

PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

Eye to Eye

Replying to a box number is as simple as sending a letter, just send your reply to Private Eye, Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London, WC2E 7HR. Remember to quote on your envelope the box number to which you are replying..

MINDS MATTER @IVORY TOWERS
The intelligent online dating site
For graduates of all eras.
www.ivorytowers.net

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat on 08456 440 919.

KCDATING
SPEED DATING in CENTRAL LONDON & NORWICH
for both Grown –Ups & younger Grown –Ups! GROWN –UPS! Age 35+ no upper age limit. June 3 London.
YOUNGER – GROWN UPS! Women aged 23 – 41 Men aged 25 – 43. May 20 London & June 10 Norwich.
TOY BOY SPECIAL! Women aged 43 – 59 Men aged 23 – 39. June 17 London.
SUGAR DADDY SPECIAL! Women 23 – 39 Men 45 – 61. July 8 London.
Strict dress code for SPECIAL events.
ONLINE bookings at www.kcdating.co.uk
01728 635064 or 07986 213120
We also offer a Private Client Bespoke Matchmaking service!

PERSON TO PERSON – non-internet magazine for new friends/partners. Est. 1984: still going 'cos it works! Details (Dept PE), PO BOX 40, Minehead TA24 5YS. Tel: 01643 709509.

HARD-WORKING NURSE seeks less pressurized times ahead. Attractive, articulate good company. Wit and womanly warmth awaits. Telephone : 07765050305

WELL-GROOMED, well-educated,well-heeled,well-travelled,well-bored tall,slim,fit chap seeks sleazy slim lady for fun,Stratford-upon-Avon. Email globe.trotter@lineone.net, photo appreciated.

JETLAGGED? Air-Hostess has occasional time in London 07952 369222 or Paris 0033626218858

HELP! the lesbians are after me... I need a strong and happy man to rescue me from their clutches. prettyslim36@hotmail.co.uk

A NEW APPROACH TO DATING FOR THE BUSY PROFESSIONAL, visiting businessman, or dating connoisseur – www.takemetodinner.co.uk

ELUSIVE SPARK:
Attractive/unusual/very bright/affectionate/honest lady, very youthful 50s, invites word from strong/genuine/courteous/balanced, n/s loyal/attentive/caring/principled/gentle man soulmate, 44-63. SCOTLAND. (Glib, pretentious, self-absorbed fantasists should ignore!) catsarewhereitsat@googlemail.com

45YEAR OLD BUXOM BLONDE available for generous gents for fun and frolicks. Please call 07964 295050

LOVELY LARGER LADY, 50's has evenings/weekends for love affair with smart, generous man bournemouthbelle@hotmail.co.uk

WOULD LIKE TO MEET? Eye readers in your area are looking for fun, friendship, dating and romance. Join free today – www.EyeDate.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE LAD, 60 slim active seeks interesting lass for occasional meets. Phone/Text 07971-251-813

THE COUNTRYSIDE DATING SITE: www.countrysidelove.co.uk

Eye Novelties

STUFF YOUR STOCKINGS @www.gizmoandwidget.com Shopping for fun

TITLES-LORD, LADY ETC. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

Eye Bet

BET YOU £1000 you can't get me pupillage.Discretion assured.07817974043

FREE BETS & MONEY-BACK BETS – The Latest Offers www.patrick-clarke.co.uk

TEXAS HOLDEM Applying the Texasholdem strategy techniques to your game, you can go from a losing hobby player to making £15k p.a as I did. www.texasholdemprime.co.uk

Eye Travel

RELAX AND ENJOY? Clear Air, Pure Water & Sheer Enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the breathtaking Malvern Hills – Featured in Michelin, Good Food & Good Hotel Guides. Gourmet breaks from only £90.00 pppn 2+nts. 01684 540000 – www.colwall.co.uk

REFRESH YOUR SPIRITS. Norfolk self-catering cottages for the discerning. www.countrysidecottagesnorfolk.com

SOMERSET. Beautiful 1-bed cottage in tranquil village nr Wells, Glastonbury, Cheddar, Bath. Newly renovated, all mod cons, private garden/patio, excellent village pub, stunning countryside. See www.thecoachhouse.tv

40% OFF Four Star famed boutique Mallorca hideaway. Sawday recommended. www.scottshotel.com

FLY GREEN! Glide over the picturesque Cotswolds. Holiday, one day & taster courses from £35. www.cotswoldgliding.co.uk or 01285 760415.

FOOD & FARMING TOURS OF UNCHARTED DEVON. Book now at www.livingstonecolbourne.co.uk.

PLANNING A FAMILY VACATION OR REUNION? WEDDING? Looking for a romantic get-away? Escape Florida style! 4 bedroom,3 Bathroom. private pool secluded beach on Gulf Mexco. Google "Eiko's Beach House Box Number 288467

SPAIN: COTTAGE IN WINE AREA. Two hours Madrid. Email Briren251@hotmail.com

Eye Business

"REDUCE CO2 PAINLESSLY, make money; view your destiny www.zenergy-world.com/businessopportunity.html

LAWYERS' GIFT CO. Carbolic Smoke Ball seeks partner to open & run Chancery Lane shop. Ideal person : London-based,money to invest,wants to work in business.Equity offered. Contact Philip via www.carbolicsmokeball.com.

THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY MANAGER On-line Action Learning Programme. Equip yourself for the new era of management. Information at www.g-acua.org

THIS RECESSION IS GREAT, I just bought a company turning over £3m for £1 and it will make over £500k e-bit this year, this is my 20th deal. Fancy learning how to buy a great businesses for nothing? First Call Chris 07776466855

BUYING ONLINE AND NOT EARNING CASHBACK? Earn money with your own FREE online shopping mall! Go to www.poundsnotpoints.com then click Earn Money!

CREDIT CRUNCHED? Survive in your own professional services business www.secretkeys.info

LOOKING FOR BOND STYLE SPY GADGETS? Find them at www.spyshopplus.com

BOOK-KEEPING & VAT SERVICE. Reliable and efficient. book-keeping.com or call 0800 731 8297

LES BOS for all your property needs in Eressos. 4 sale 2 rent www.lesboshaus.com email info@lesboshaus.com

TIMELY BUSINESS VENTURE OPPORTUNITY. Factor return on modest 5/6 figure investment. 07867806797 roxxello@gmail.com

BUSINESS ADVISOR AVAILABLE. Stanley Silver FinstD. FCMI Top class businessman having built and sold A £££multi-million business now available to help Others to improve sales and marketing operations. 07860 572 055 Experience in buying and selling companies. 020 8441 9151 Great company ambassador to open doors. Daily fees plus expenses, London/South East. Enquire in confidence, silandgill@btinternet.com

PRIVATE EMAIL PERSONAL EMAIL SECURITY TOOL. www.PTPOFFER.com

Eye Charity

OPT CAMPAIGNS for sustainable populations here and abroad. Membership £15 www.optimumpopulation.org

MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY, always underfunded, services and jobs at risk. See www.pamh.co.uk. Donations acknowledged on website if wished. E-mail: diarmid.murray@pamh.co.uk

Eye Read

BE A WRITER, NOT A TYPIST! Creative Writing course, France, end June. Offers available. Featured in "100 Best Worldwide Vacations" book. Tel: 01299 896819. www.frenchhouseparty.co.uk

NEW STUDS TERKEL THE FINAL INTERVIEW only £5.75 Info from seneca321@yahoo.com

SCUNT.CO.UK Kicking truth in it's smug, self-righteous face. www.scunt.co.uk

MURDER, MYSTERY, MAYHEM. Anti-establishment, anarchic, arcane. 'Terror' and 'Direct Action' by Lance Black. www.lanceblack.co.uk.

www.the-sps.org

POLITICAL THRILLER: LATENT HAZARD. Intriguingly topical. Conspiracy, shady City dealings and ill-fated spin:- Think Ludlum/Grisham! www.latenthazard.com

THE NAG HAMMADI SECRETS. Everyone's way out of recession. www.peye.thebiologyofprayer.com

Eye Say

hermes trismegistus and chris rosencreutz at www.sochero.org.uk

Eye Help

BANKRUPTCY EXPERT Strategies for a clean exit 07964 424796

CHINA EXPERT travel leisure song dance film web chris@diamondhighway.com 02083648063

Eye Law

HAVE YOU BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR SOLICITORS OR DOES YOUR SOLICITOR LACK THAT CUTTING EDGE? Ahmud & Co. Solicitors, the lawyers that make a difference. www.ja-solicitors.com Tel: 020 8886 1111 or info@ja-solicitors.com No Legal Aid.

DIVORCED/DIVORCING? Defend your assets/income. We fight your corner. Thirty years experience. Contact Divorce Dept, Pellmans, 1 Abbey Street, Eynsham, Oxford, OX29 4TB. Tel: 01865 884400 mail@pellmans.co.uk

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

FIND ANYBODY: www.locateperson.net Debt recovery – expert private investigation. Call +44 (0)121 247 5550 and 07773 788389.

THE 'NO WIN – NO FEE' Specialists: Professional Negligence (www.proneg.co.uk). Disputed Wills & Employment Law (www.sblaw.co.uk). Accident Claims (www.newdeal-fairdeal.co.uk). Free case assessment. Telephone: 0808 155 6389.

Eye Buy/Sell

WE BUY PRE-63 EYES, OZ, IT Friends etc – underground@shoreditch.net

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Not a shop just a shed. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. TN12 5JB. Telephone 01622 871 353.

A CLEAR VISION FOR BRITAIN! Nope, not more Tory hype, but what you get from our state of the art, but cheap as chips flat screen TVs. For more brilliant offers call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

EYES 400 ASSORTED. 70's to early 90's. Offers. Rupert.Montgomery@yahoo.co.uk

THE PERFECT CARTOON CUPPA. www.ceratopia.co.uk and click on Shop

WANTED TO BUY Philosophy & Social Science or any Academic Books Fair prices paid-will travel to view/buy O'Donoghue Books Hay-on Wye 01497 822 831 odonoghue.books@zen.co.uk

PE VOL 1 AND 2. V RARE (verified by tony rushton)good condition. highest offer call 07960954167

Eye Need

INTERNATIONAL MAN OF LEISURE needs emergency top-up funds to continue boozing and philandering. Your help is very much appreciated. HSBC 400107 01100688

HIGHLY RESPECTED COMPOSER stymied by lack of money to write. Help appreciated by me and by history. Barclays 20-63-66 40088412

AN ART FORGER who specialises or is capable of replicating J. W Turner's work for personal project. Please email any examples to nick.west@tate.org.uk

SEMI-DETACHED HUSBAND (50'S) WLTM Semi-detached wife for occasional cream tea. Somerset Box Number 288528

SINGLE HARDWORKING PERSON STRUGGLING WITH MORTGAGE. Help gratefully appreciated. Lloyds TSB 77-48-17 43430560

PICTURESQUE CHURCH DESPERATE for £10,000 to help re-roof the chancel. 40-63-01, a/c 061136975

DESPARATE KOI CARP LOVER needs help to rectify pond wrecked by cowboy builder who has conned me and run. 80 fish barely surviving in paddling pools.IF 5000 fish loving EYE readers could spare a £1 or a bit more their home could be repaired.Many thanks. HALIFAX 11-00-15 00879805

BUSINESS, STRONG GROWTH, CASH IN BANK, NO DEBTS, desperately needs premises, turning business away, banks won't help. £34k deposit top-up needed. Four f/t jobs created. Wits end, please help. Tel 01225 899286 Lloyds 309606 03227953

FASCINATING REAL LIFE STORY TO TELL AND SELL SEEKS GENUINE AGENT. 07964 037613

PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIC NEEDS £13,000 TO PAY DEBTS + £27,000 to start a small business and buy a decent car (any amount £50.00 to £30,000) gratefully received. Please help. Co operative Bank sort code 08-92-49 account number 04068488

NEW PARENTS PREVENTED BY NEGATIVE EQUITY FROM FLEEING abusive neighbours. £10k sets us free. 600702 31635768

STRUGGLING DIVORCED MOTHER seeks easy payment and loan of £25,000 Tel 079312 34596 Abbey sort code 09 00 20 account number X88 08 799. GUN

SAVING! GIRL, 38, DIVORCED, few relatives wants time out to write potential best seller. Seeks warm writing retreat for lab plus one and or £30k loan. Can do business deal/profit share/have properties.07929 048386. 40-19-05 71372300.Thank you.

ASPIRING WRITER seeks secluded space to write. Fully housetrained. Aspiring-writer@live.com

RETIRED MARINER SEEKS COMPANION / carer Lyme Regis area. Live-in private accommodation, use of car. House cleaner employed. Non-Smoker. No pets. Suit active. Educated, cultured lady, fond of the sea. Could arrange living-out for trial period if desired. Excellent references provided and required. Box no 286558

Eye Services

PRIVATE LONDON CLINIC: (Moorgate/Old Street tubes) offers walk-in and postal sexual health services, online impotence treatment. Open evenings. Tel: 020 7490 8988. www.DrThom.com

HENRY HERBERT Bespoke, Visiting Suit & Shirt Tailor. Shirts £79. Suits £495. All Made in England. Telephone 020 7727 2485. Visit www.henryherbert.com

REMOVALS AND STORAGE: UK and European. www.bayesofhampstead.co.uk Tel: 020 7435 3694.

FIND ANYBODY: www.locateperson.net – James Black LL.B(Hons) expert private investigation, international +44 (0) 121 247 5550 and 07773 788389.

SPEECH LOOMING? Relax, I'll write it for you! You're due to speak at a wedding / dinner / event. Don't waste time worrying. Lawrence: 07970 046 230 or www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk

NEED TO SOURCE HOT GRADUATE TALENT FOR YOUR FIRM? We have unrivalled access to the brightest minds from top universities. sanctuarysearch@sanctuarynewspaper.co.uk; 0203 1451504

STOP THE BUGGERS Professional Security Sweeps www.stopthebuggers.co.uk Email: info@stopthebuggers.co.uk Tel : 01342 719361

LEARN SPANISH ONLINE. This works! Free demo. Beginners' level. www.stellaspanish.eu

CHEATING PARTNER? Discreet Surveillance. Confidentiality Guaranteed. Contact us at www.covert-partners.co.uk

NEW 'NO WIN, NO FEE' for professional negligence, debt, employment and will dispute claims by specialist Solicitors. Freephone 0800 169 2133. www.halborg.com

VAT PROBLEMS? Taxman on your case?Speak to Eamon McNicholas.www.EamonMcNicholas.com

SLIDES/NEGATIVES ONTO CD/DVD. Digital photo restoration. Friendly, efficient service. www.digitiseyourphotos.co.uk

MICROSOFT EXCEL Spreadsheets, Data Analysis, Databases, Models built to requirement and emailed. Remote working, confidential MBA financial analyst team, long experience blue-chip to start-ups. Satisfaction or no payment. After sales support. 07815 933517 jake@vetroconsulting.com

Eye Donate

www.sightsavers.org

www.oxfam.org.uk

www.SmileTrain.org

www.C-R-Y.org.uk

www.blind.org.uk

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

www.gwt.org.uk

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

BINDERS

Keep your PRIVATE EYE collection clean and tidy with our smart, dark blue binders – now with a new spine fitting for easier use.

Each binder holds 26 issues (a year's worth)

Price £10 (inc. p&p). For overseas orders please add £1 per binder.

ORDER ONLINE AT: **www.private-eye.co.uk**
CALL: **01795 414 870** for credit card orders or further information

Or complete this order form and send with your payment to: PRIVATE EYE BINDERS, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.

No of binders_____ I enclose a cheque for £ _____ payable to Private Eye.

OR please charge MasterCard/Visa/Switch (Issue no_____) Expiry date_____

Card number

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone (in case we have a query with your order)

Email

☐ Yes, please keep me up to date with details of other products and services from Private Eye that may be of interest to me.

SNORING?

Designed to hold the lower jaw gently forward, so opening the airway, the **SnorBan** Mouthpiece targets the cause of snoring and could help you stop.

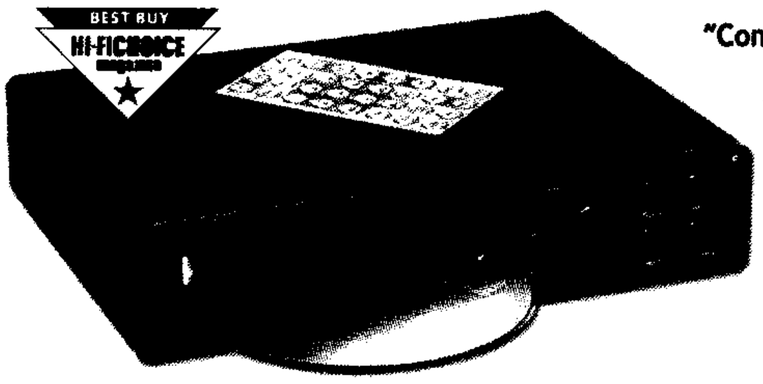
FIGHTS DAYTIME FATIGUE
EASY TO FIT & WEAR
30 DAY REFUND

From only **£45.00** inc P&P

Ordering: **www.snorban.co.uk** / Tel **01243 572993**

Got CDs?

The **Brennan JB7** is a new kind of CD player that holds up to 2,500 CDs. You can find and play a specific track or album from your armchair in seconds. Or play your entire music collection with one click.



"Compact & ultra-simple... the JB7 shows superb clarity of thought and engineering"

GRAMOPHONE

www.brennan.co.uk

The Daily Drinker

How many grape varieties in the world? 30? 100? 1,000?

There are more than 10,000...so why on earth is everyone drinking Merlot and Sauvignon Blanc?

Ever tried a Nerello Mascalese from Sicily? How about a Godello from Spain? Zweigelt, Alvarinho, Bonarda? No?

Shouldn't you be finding out just what a vine can do?

Bowes Wine introduces The Daily Drinker, a wine club for those with inquisitive minds and palates.

For an annual fee of £200, you will receive a pair of bottles every month, delivered to your door. Read the accompanying tasting notes, learn about the varieties, the regions and producers. Quarterly membership also available.

Some buy membership as a gift. Some treat themselves.

For more information and to look at Back Issues
www.boweswine.co.uk/DD

BOWES WINE

+44 (0)1380 827291 caspar(@boweswine.co.uk

APPLEBY ASSOCIATES
Executive Career Consultants

Worried about your future?

We can help.

www.ApplebyAssociates.com
0845 66 55 215

Lost out due to bad advice?

Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor /surveyor?

Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

---

CHAPMAN

HAND CRAFTED CANVAS BAGS
MADE IN ENGLAND

www.chapmanbags.com
+44 (0)1228 514514

---

tightwrite
WRITING TO ORDER

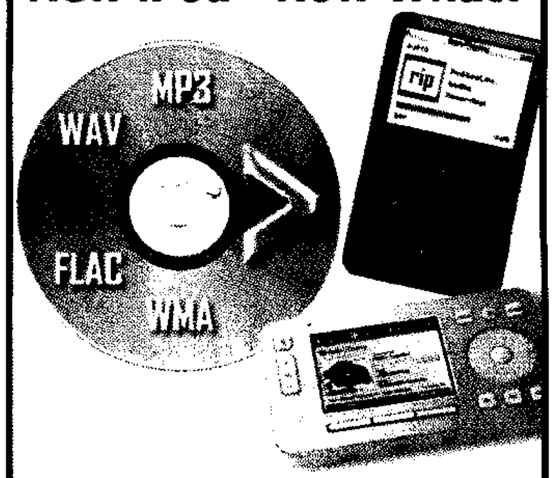
Good strong copy written –
from your idea, from your draft.
Dirty to clean copy editing.
Great rates.

peterknights@live.co.uk

---

ripcaster.co.uk

New iPod - Now What?

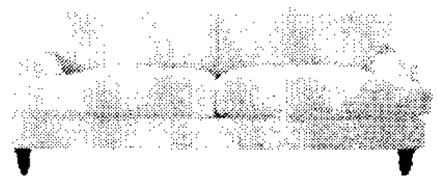


Tel: 0118 321 82 92 www.ripcaster.co.uk

Let us convert your CDs
We Do It For You

---

sofa.com



caution: may cause drowsiness

For reader offers please visit:
www.sofa.com/eye
or call FREE on:
0800 988 6689

LOCKOUT.mobi

Are you locked out?
In the United Kingdom?
Call our 24/7 Locksmith Service
Glazing & Boarding
www.lockout.mobi
on your mobile for details
Tel: 0800 747 007

A CRUISE WHERE YOU'RE INVITED TO ASK WHAT THE POINT OF IT ALL IS.

IF you've sailed the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean before, you'll know how conducive it is to quiet contemplation.

For this reason we thought it would be a good idea to combine a two-week Aegean cruise with an untaxing course in ancient thought.

Accordingly, our Ancient Greek Philosophy cruise takes place from 25 October – 5 November this year. It consists of a series of lectures and visits to sites associated with the most important philosophers and scientists of the Classical world.

It is intended to appeal not only to those who are fascinated by Classical civilization but also to anyone who has ever wanted to learn about the nature of mind and the process of thought. Participants should come away from this cruise knowing much more about the principal thinkers of ancient Greece.

More importantly, perhaps, you will also have acquired some understanding of the eternal questions of philosophy and of their relevance to the modern world.

Naturally more time is spent in Athens than in any other place on the itinerary. No single location or time has ever come close to Classical Athens for the importance and abundance of its philosophical attainments – let alone done so while there were comparable achievements in the visual arts, literature and statecraft. Apart from relevant associations, there is of course a great deal to see and for those who haven't been there for a few years there are some pleasing surprises in store.

Athens, however, is an exception in that many of the other sites associated with the great philosophers are off the beaten track, even for well-travelled Hellenists. The option of guided country walks on the islands of Kos, Samos and Chios further enhances the reflective nature of the cruise.

Detail of Raphael's *The School of Athens*, 19th century lithograph (adapted).

Nor is it as dry as you might think. In the spirit of Plato's Symposium (which was, after all, a drinking party) we will also be hearing about and sampling some of the exciting wines produced by a new generation of Greek wine-makers. Ontology followed by oenology, if you like.

Central to the whole venture are the lecturers, who are selected not merely for their erudition, but also for their ability to enthral with insight, analysis and narrative. Accompanying us on this cruise will be a professor of philosophy, a medical historian, two masters of wine and a classicist. Their talks will take place both ashore and on board.

Talking of which, the vessel we sail on is small but extremely well-appointed. You'll be delighted to find no casino, no disco, no cabaret and definitely no piped music. Bars remain open till the early hours, but the main source of evening entertainment is conversation with your lecturers and like-minded travellers.

The price varies according to the berth you request, but it's worth remembering that the cost is all-in – flights, accommodation, meals (with wine) and coaches are all included. There are no hidden extras or surcharges to pay.

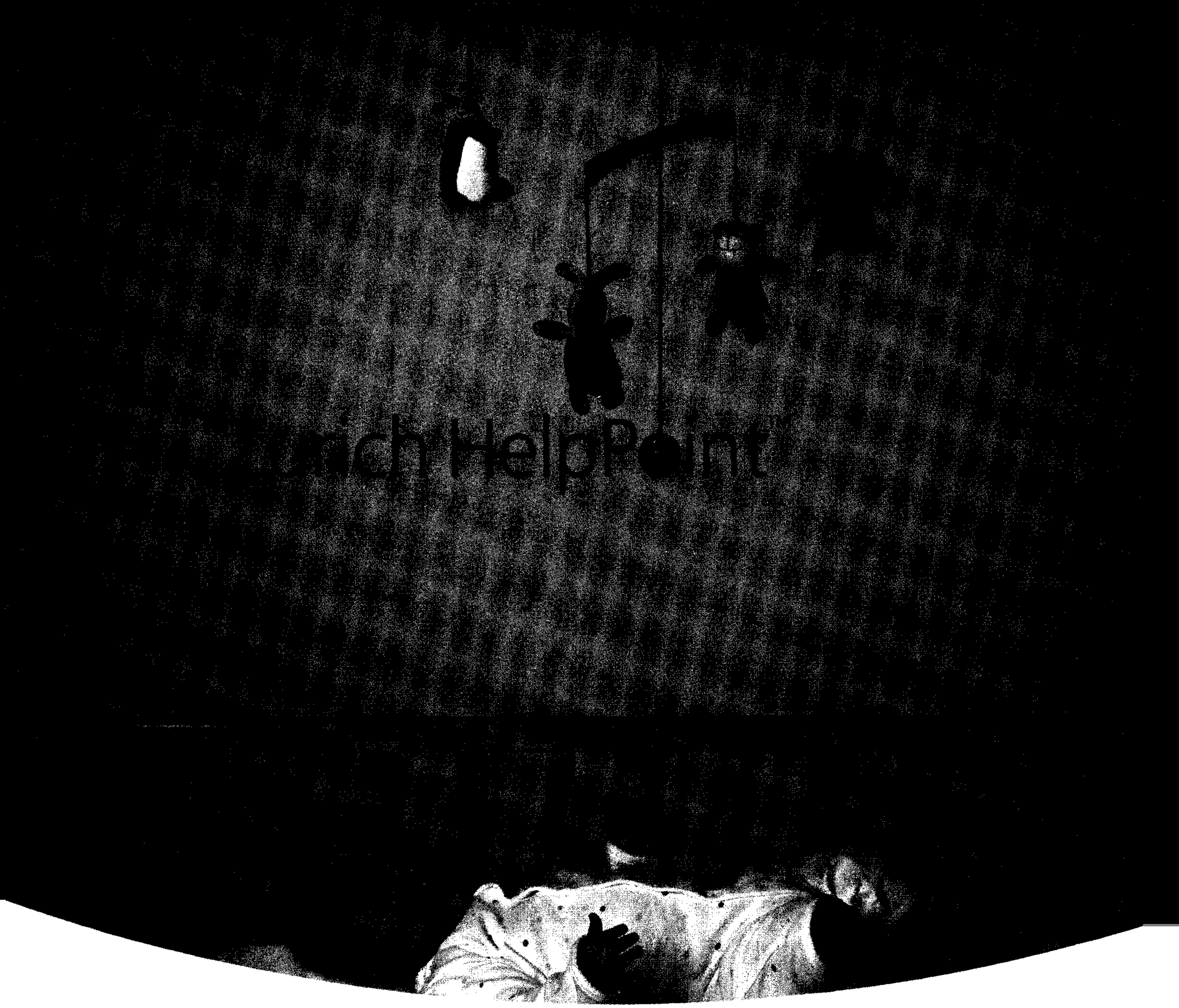
If you'd like to know more about the Ancient Greek Philosophy cruise, please call 020 8742 3355. Alternatively, visit ***www.martinrandall.com/philosophy***

We may not have the answers to the ultimate questions, but for all other queries we hope we can help.

MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

Highlights of the Ancient Greek Philosophy cruise: Day 1: Fly to Istanbul. Day 2: At sea. Day 3: Miletos, birthplace of Thales and thus of philosophy. Later choose between the standing ruins of Priene and the vast Ephesus, home of Heraclitus. Sail in the evening for Kos. Day 4: Kos. Home of Hippocrates and the first of our country walks. Sail in the evening for Piraeus. Days 5 & 6: Athens. A place unparalleled in history for philosophical creativity. Choice of excursions, including the Acropolis, Archaeological Museum and the Agora. Sail for Samos. Day 7: Samos. Birthplace of Epicurus and Pythagoras, and site of the Tunnel of Eupalinos. Second of our country walks in a setting of astounding natural beauty. Sail later for Stavros. Day 8: Stageira. The little-visited birthplace of Aristotle boasts substantial remains. Sail in the evening for Abdera, birthplace of Protagoras and Democritus. Philippi and its attractive valley site. Sail in the evening for Chios. Day 10: Chios. Possible birthplace of Homer. The third of our countryside walks. Sail in the evening for Dikili. Day 11: Pergamon. The Acropolis and the Asclepeion of the physician Galen. Sail in the evening for Istanbul, passing Assos where Aristotle studied. Day 12: Moor at Istanbul and return flights to London.

ATOL
OLIDAYS WITH
00% FINANCIAL
ROTECTION



Life insurance plans that can adapt as your circumstances change. At least some things still revolve around you.

Zurich HelpPoint™ is here when you need more than just insurance. We offer a range of life plans, from ones that would pay off your mortgage should the unthinkable ever happen, to others that could help you to protect against loss of earnings due to illness. Unfortunately, none of them can help with the nappies and the lack of sleep. For more information visit www.zurich.co.uk

Here to help your world.

ZURICH

Because change happens

Zurich Assurance Ltd. underwrite Life, pension & investments plans. Registered in England and Wales under company number 0245667
Registered Office: UK Life Centre, Station Road, Swindon, SN1 1E

19 >
9 770032 888129